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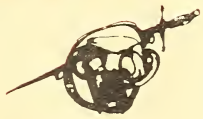


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The PHOTO-DRAMATIST



MAY, 1921

What Was Clytemnestra But a Stage Vampire
By RUPERT HUGHES

What to Avoid in a Scenario
By JESSE L. LASKY

Quid Rides, or Chaplin's Lot Is a Happy One
By ELMER ELLSWORTH

Also KING VIDOR, FREDERICK PALMER, ALAN PUTNAM, GERTRUDE BARNUM and Others

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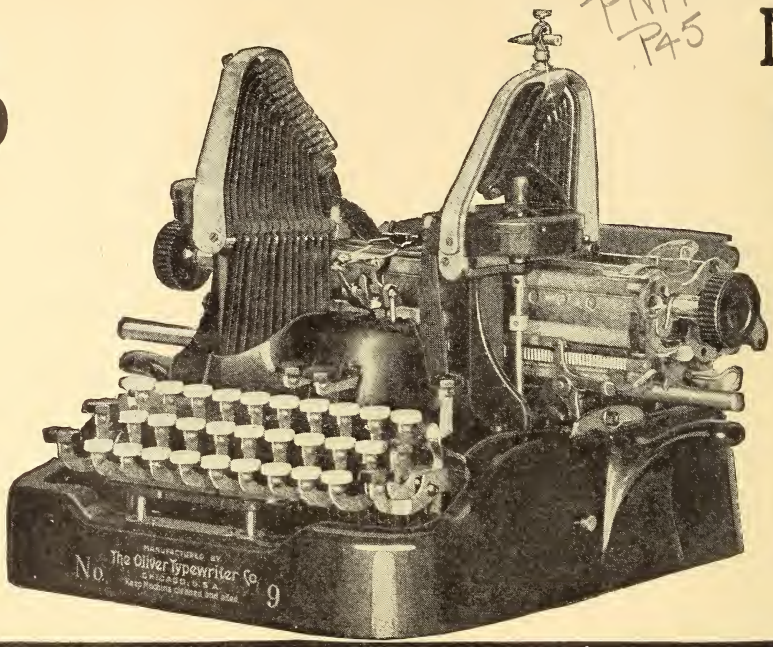


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MAY 11 1921

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VOL. III. MAY, 1921 NO. 1

What Was Clytemnestra but a Stage Vampire!

By RUPERT HUGHES

IT IS OUR little-appreciated privilege to assist at the birth of as new, as great and as lasting an art as the drama, for there is little risk in a prophecy that the moving picture has come to stay as long as mankind stays here.

The writers for the movies today are in the position that the first playwrights of Greece were in when Aeschylos flourished. with Euripides, Sophocles, Aristophanes and the other gods of the theater.

This will provoke ribald laughter from those who cannot imagine the classics as once new and whose ignorance conceals from them what the classics had to endure in their own day. Was not Aeschylos driven from the theater by an outraged audience and put on trial for sacrilege? Sophocles was refused a production once, was accused of base commercialism, and his greatest work, the Oedipos, was considered inferior to a play by an obscure author. Aeschylos and Sophocles wrote each about a hundred plays and won prizes for only one in six.

EURIPIDES and Aristophanes are among the most solemnly regarded names in literature, yet the most ferocious critic of the movies never said anything worse of the worst movie than Aristophanes said of Euripides, whom he accused of every banality, sensationalism and plagiarism, and of the immediate death of whose trash he was certain. And no slapstick movie ever presented has contained any coarser, cheaper, staler horseplay than the antics that fill Aristophanes' comedies, to say nothing of the indecencies that astound even the least puritanical readers.

Aristophanes' characters tossed figs and nuts into the audience to please the groundlings, and once he asked the bald-headed men to vote for his play because the author was bald, too!

The plays of the Greek masters were full of melodrama, coincidence, happy endings, missing wills, mistaken identities, murder, poison, sex appeal and all the ingredients. Some critics consider Oedipos the greatest of ancient tragedies, but what a scenario it makes! And how the agony is piled on! Oedipos, having learned that he was doomed to kill his father and marry his mother. flees from his supposed father, who had merely adopted him. Then he fulfills the oracle, and a plague falls on the city that has made him king because he guessed the riddle of the Sphinx. Seeking to run down the criminal whose blood guilt has brought on the plague, he denounces the villain, only to learn that he himself is the man. Whereupon his wife, learning that she is also his mother, hangs herself, and Oedipos, tearing off her golden brooches, scratches his own eyes out and bewails the fate of his poor children, daughters of their own grandmother.

What the censors would do to such a moving picture would be a caution, but how can we accuse the movies of sensational plots when we consider those of the great tragedies?

THE movie vampire has become a joke, yet what else was Clytemnestra or Helen of Troy but a vampire?

Movie plots are often mechanical in their solutions, but the greatest Greeks did not

hesitate to let a god down on a creaking machine to solve a problem that could not be untangled naturally.

The very people who regret the movies and stay away from them are the ones who should flock to them and help them to the great destiny that awaits the patronage of more discriminatory audiences. The movies ought not to be condemned for being popular or for trying to be, for that has been the aim of all the masters.

In Shakespeare's time the most popular successes were not his plays, though his plays were also packed with cheap comedy, horseplay, plagiarism, sensationalism, local gags and slang. They have their majestic moments, their splendid passions, their overwhelming beauties, but so have the moving pictures to any one who will approach them with sympathy.

I HAVE no protest against those who respect the moving pictures at their best, while quarreling with their manifest faults. They are helpful physicians. But let the wholesale denouncers of the moving pictures take this thought to themselves: When they think themselves so magnificent and so intellectual in their sweeping satires they are really damning themselves all the while. They are kicking themselves upstairs into that dreary attic where the critics go who are what Horace called "the praisers of the past." They are hurling themselves into the dusty trunks with the satirists who despised Euripides, abhorred the theater entire, who called Shakespeare "Shake-scene," and thought to have killed him by the boomerangs they hurled.

There is only one lofty task for any critic, and that is to strive for what Brunetiere called "collaboration," the collaboration with creative artists in the discovery and exploitation of beauty and truth. Our scholarly critics are abstaining from the greatest opportunity critics ever had—to collaborate in the development of a great art born in their own time.

The moving picture, instead of being used as a target for academic disdain and hilarious scorn, should be welcomed as a glorious new language, a gift of the generous gods, which, like the drama, painting, sculpture, architecture, verse, fiction and the other arts, must purvey an enormous amount of commonplace material to the vast public but incidentally brings forth many beautiful moments of passion, grace, tenderness, laughter, regret, despair, rapture and picturesque illumination of life.

Watching, as I do, so many critics who ought to know better, swatting the movies with their bladders and assailing them with their little squirt-guns of sarcasm, I can only think of them, in the language of childhood, as "Smart Alecs" who aren't as smart as they think they are.

Two mistakes are made in respect to the hypercritical attitude toward the movies, which have not been commented upon so far as I know.

The first is the overlooking of the critic's habit of mind. I have heard speakers and real writers who cry out that the movies do not keep up to the high level of the theater, that they are threatening the very existence of our theater. One might think that these critics were lovers of our theater. But look up their other remarks and you will find that when they speak of our theater, they speak of it also with contempt. Their praise is only a club to bash the movies with.

One man, for instance, wrote not long ago the vilest abuses he could concoct, in a brief career devoted to concocting abuses, and hurled them at the unspeakable moving-picture industry because it was apparently about to crowd the beloved drama off the map. He called the moving-picture producers every contemptuous name his practiced pen could devise. If you did not know his other work, you would think of him as an idolator of the American theater and a humble worshiper of American playwrights hurrying to their defense. As a matter of fact, he had written the same article again and again, *mutatis mutandis,* against the American theater and everybody connected with that loathsome institution. The American manager, author or actor who got a good word from him was as rare as a snowball in hell, and was as sure to be scorched in the near future.

REMEMBER this, then: When you hear people abusing the movies, learn their opinions about the other American arts, and, ten to one, you will find that they equally deplore our hopeless inability to be artistic. They sneer at our novels, our magazines, our paintings, sculpture, poetry, drama, comedy, architecture—at all of the phases of our activity in this splendid era of our efflorescence.

They compare our worst authors with the foreigner's best. They clamor, "Why do we have Bertha M. Clay while England has Thomas Hardy?"—though Bertha M. Clay was, in fact, the pen name of an Englishman.

They sniffle, "Why do we have the Sunday supplement comics while France has Rodin?"—though the French cheap comic is even cheaper than ours. They bellow, "Why do we have the movies while Russia has Tolstoy?"—though the American movies are far more popular in Russia than Tolstoy ever was.

They do not compare our great with the great artists abroad, or our trash with foreign trash, which is just as bad and just as popular overseas as here.

These professional mourners keep up an eternal wake over American art and weep over an imaginary corpse which all the while is a giant, laughing to run his race, and running it; with all the stumbling, blundersome ruthlessness of a giant, indeed, but with a progress that the squirt-gun, popgun, critics have never checked, though they repeat today the same stale slanders their forebears heaped on American art when Hawthorne and Poe, Emerson, Whitman and many another were pouring forth their immortal works.



Rupert Hughes is fired with enthusiasm for the movies. He believes in them as they are, and more intensely, as they promise to be. Four of his stories have been transferred to the screen—"The Cup of Fury," "Scratch My Back," "Hold Your Horses," and "Dangerous Curves Ahead," and more coming.

Today the moving picture is actually achieving masterpieces, and they are sweeping the world. And now as from time immemorial, as it ever was and ever shall be, the typical intellectual critic is distinguishing himself by his inability to see the forest for the trees.

The second reminder I want to emphasize is this: Don't be misled by faults of detail and by lapses of taste or inspiration in moving pictures. Remember that Homer nodded, that many critics have confessed that they got stuck in the "Illiad," the "Aeneid," the "Inferno," in "Paradise Lost," "Don Quixote," "Tom Jones," "Les Miserables," and other masterpieces.

Edgar Allan Poe said that nobody could write a long poem without ceasing to be a poet at times.

There is, indeed, no masterwork of any size that sustains its highest level always. There is no masterwork that does not contain much to discourage and offend even its admirers.

What novel or short story, essay or epic did you ever read in which you felt no flag of interest, or desire to skip?

The great works of genius are great because of their high spots, their superlative moments, not because of their perfection or their lack of low spots and blemishes.

When, then, you consider the many pictures and find much in each picture to reject, take that fact as inevitable in any experience. Look for the moments of fine feeling, of rushing action, of noble background; look for the little touches of humanity that clutch or tickle the heart, the ingenuities of construction, deftnesses of characterization or form, novelties of angle of thought or picture, flashes of delight in imagination of realism.

If you hunt for the flowers in this great field you will find them everywhere. If you hunt for the weeds you will find them. But what a fool you are when you go a-Maying and despise the violets because you find

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What to Avoid in a Scenario

By JESSE L. LASKY

(First Vice-President Famous Players-Lasky Corporation)

IT is usually easier to predicate a negation than the reverse, but there seems little doubt at this time that the motion picture will profit more by suggesting certain eliminations than by suggesting new forms which are already under contemplation and which will develop with the growth and added importance of the screen.

The writer for the screen is confronted with a real problem—the necessity of visualizing everything that he uses in the way of material. Even the use of the subtitle will only enable him to escape in minor degree the need of constant action. Thus, certain things which might pass muster in print cannot stand the cold and irrevocable test of visualization.

Such being the case, the one faculty that the writer for the screen must employ to a greater extent than any other, perhaps, is good taste. He must be guided by his sense of the fitness of things in all cases.

Recently the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation sent out a list of what might be termed "don'ts" to its executives and which has been called by some "the fourteen points." These are for the guidance of those in an executive capacity in each department, to avoid and, in fact, entirely prevent, the appearance in our productions of anything of an objectionable nature. Invariably in the past, Paramount Pictures have been free from taint and it was rather to avoid the possibility of anything that might be construed as offensive being shown than to suggest any alteration in present or past policies, that the communication was issued.

THE very opening paragraph of the statement contains the crux of the matter:

"Clean pictures have always been the aim of Famous Players-Lasky Corporation. The people of the United States want wholesome amusement, free from suggestive or morbid incidents."

It is obvious therefore, that no pictures showing improper situations or scenes will be tolerated in our pictures. True, practically every photodrama must contain love interest which involves some form of sex attraction. The problem is therefore to present wholesome love and to avoid any sensuality. It is, again, the price of visualization and that which will not shock on the printed page and, even on the stage, will only be mildly suggestive, may become distinctly offensive on the screen.

The subject of white slavery is taboo—the evil is no longer a matter of public moment and therefore has no place in motion pictures.

The only excuse for showing illicit relationships is to prove that virtue is rewarded while vice is punished. Drama must occasionally contain elements of this nature, but to make them the basic theme of a photoplay is to run grave risks—therefore only the closest scrutiny is adequate to avoid pitfalls.

Undue exposure of the undraped figure is unnecessary and should be employed only in far-shots of children and similar examples where the purity of the subject robs it of any suggestive quality.

There are certain forms of dancing which have no place on the screen—certainly the *danse du ventre* is inadmissable.

THE cave-man sense is out of date and it follows that passion depicted in brutal terms forms one of the subjects to be avoided.

In the essential conflict between good and evil it is justifiable to occasionally show underworld scenes, but an unnecessary accentuation of drug using, of crime and vice in any form, is bad taste and as such does not belong in the worth-while photoplay.

To make drunkenness or gambling attractive is to devote the screen to a most reprehensible purpose and it is unthinkable that a normal director or producer would make use of such scenes. The seamy side of life must be shown at times, but it should never be made the sole subject of a picture.

To openly portray the details of the commission of a crime is to chance the influence upon those weak mentally or morally, and therefore should be avoided in pictures.

To offend any creed or forms of religious belief is unnecessary and in bad taste. Religion is not a good subject for pictures save in a relative degree and then only in

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Quid Rides

or

Chaplin's Lot Is a Happy One

By ELMER ELLSWORTH

I HAVE been asked to contribute a piece about comedy to this number of the PHOTODRAMATIST, and I guess my friends will be tickled pink to hear I am going to contribute, and they will think that it is quite a compliment to this paper, as I am always being asked to contribute to something or other, but hardly ever do if I can get out of it, as it is against my principals to contribute, for if you fall for the Y. M. C. A. and the Sinn Fein why you half to go right down the line to the Methodist Missions and the Police Pic-nic and so on.

Still and all my being so well known as the writer of a number of pitchers which have turned out to be great favorities with people who don't like to stand in line in front of the theaters, and on acct. of being an inmate of the Chaplin studio (where they practically specialize in comedy) for quite a term, I don't see how I could of refused to contribute. I realize that there is not only a great interest in me, but also in Chaplin since "The Kid" has showed that he is not slipping, as some of his brother comedians feared.

It may not be generally known that I am no longer at the Chaplin studio, in fact I would not be surprised if even Mr. Chaplin himself don't know it. This may surprise people who knew me as his right hand man, but maybe some of these people don't know that Mr. Chaplin is left handed.

For a long time after I was ast to write this piece I couldn't think what to call it, and was almost in despair, as they say, when suddenly I thought up the above. So what I say neighbors is: Never give up, but keep trying—there are pippins for everybody if they will dig hard enough. This is point No. 1 of the fourteen points for young photodramitsts.

I hope I will be excused for "expatiating" (talking more) on the subject of my main title, as otherwise some people might not think it was so good. In the first place there is a kind of a ketch in it, as you will see pretty soon. Plenty of saps on the pitcher lots would think it is the main title for a *2-R WD for Tom Mix or Hoot Gibson or somebody. Boys it is Latin, and it will go sailing over the simps' heads like an old cotton hat over a back yard fence, and it will even make some of the big producers go back to their old college days to refresh their memories. "Rides" is an old Guinea word, in two syllables, from rodeo —to laugh or giggle. "But surely" some of the little photodramatists might say "Quid is English—and awfully English at that—life Arf-crown, or Elf Reeves." No children, Quid is Guinea too. But now I think that I have stalled enough, and I am going to spill the real dirt. It means "Why we laugh." Well as I said before, friends, I like my main title. It makes me feel like I don't half to take my hat off to any Eminent Author from Culver City to Rex Beach. I understand one of these birds is going to have a piece in this same No. with a high toned Greeko Roman flavor about this here Clytemnester, but I guess he will see that some of our town boys can give him a Remington for his Oliver, as the fellow says.

NOW let's see, where was I at? Oh yes, I was speaking about the title, which is "Quid Rides," as you will see by looking at the top of this piece. That is it will be there unlest the people that runs this paper do like they do with the pitchers at the U and changes it back East, or somewhere. I don't know whether the head men of this paper intends to have these here Art titles or not, but if they do I hope they don't have this one show a buckaroo on a kyuse going hellferleather up a rocky defile—or down one either for that matter—like once when I was out at the **U, I wrote a subtitle like this:

"Fired by his love
He resolves to win renown."

Well when the thing come out, this subtitle showed a dame kicking a guy out of

*Two real Western drama.

**Universal Film Mfg. Co.

the door—and that was what crabbed *that* pitcher.

Well I guess this is enough for the present about the title.

All of us old timers knows that it don't do to lean too hard on one faction. (Point 2 for the Photodramtist)if we have anything to cut to, and we will now drop the subject for the time being, recurring, or coming back, to it perhaps now and then as the fancy may seize us, or we may have something of interest or moment concerning it to import. It seems to me that we are making fine progress with our subject —our main title is established pretty good, and if we try to clinch it any harder we might find that we are getting our piece so it drags, and our audience might begin to get down in their seats and cough, and finally quit us cold and turn over to see what the other Eminent Authors has got to say. We can't afford to loose no readers fer this paper in no such a way as that. So I am going to get right to what I am sure all my readers can hardly wait to hear—that is something about me and how I reached the rung on the ladder that I have reached, so I am going to tell you all about it, with the p r o v i s o that those of neither sect are going to be told anything risky—as the saying is. My article is going to be clean, no matter how much my readers kick. You are not going to be told anything that would bring a blush to even the cheek of a Pennsylvania censor.

MR. ELMER ELLSWORTH, who dubs himself a "retired humorist," came into the picture world as so many have done by the way of the newspaper and theatrical paths. In his youth he was a frequent contributor to "Puck" and "Life." His first activity with the films was as title editor at the Universal. He then collaborated with Paul Powell in several photoplays, and is credited with the authorship of "The Weaker Vessel," which earned him the sobriquet of "the Bernard Shaw of the screen" and led to his engagement with Charlie Chaplin, who expressed himself at the time as regarding this picture as beng 100%.

FIRST off I guess you would like to know how I got my start in the pitcher game, as that is one of the most serious questions in the game, but I can't go into that further than to tell you that the studios was all short handed at the time, owing to the war, but I said that no matter how bad I would like to go "over there" I would do my bit right at home. What do I care, I says, who fights the country's battles if I can write its Pitchers—besides that it would be a good chance for me to let the enemy know what I thought. So I finely excepted a position that I had been after for a couple of months.

Well from the jump, it just seemed like I couldn't get no breaks a tall. I would write a pitcher that would be thought up real intelligent, and then them bums in the different depts. would maul it around until its own father wouldn't know it. My pitcher would get put on by a chump who couldn't direct a post card, with hams instead of acters, a bum as camera man, rotten sets, foney lighting, cheesy lab. work, and I don't know what, until it was such a mess that even the boys in the cutting room couldn't save it, as they generally do if there is a chance like they done with the Miracle Man, Humoresque Con. Yankee, 4 Horses, and some of them Demill pitchers. Sometime if you get a chance to talk to a bird that cut a pitcher you like, you will find out what a flop it would of been if he hadn't of cut it.

Still and all my pitchers had something that Dave Griffith's or D u g Farebanks pitchers didn't h a v e — any body could tell the difference right off —and in spite of a lot of knocking that was going on, one of them broke a record in Seattle, where it changed the bill in the middle of the week for the first time in the history of the theater. At Sue City they couldn't get the people into the house when my pitcher was on, and one exhibitor wrote that it would be a fine feature for a holiday bill where the fire ordinance was very strict, as there wouldn't be no overcrowding. It was soon after that I found that flanders fields wasn't the only place that firing was going on. The head man called me into conference one day and he says, "Your stuff is not going acrost." I says, "What's the matter, ain't you satisfied with it?" He says, "Sure I'm satisfied—so much so that I don't want no more of it. I'm fed up with it," he says. "Well what are you going to do about it?" I perryed. "You know the old song "Goodbye, Sweetheart,

Goodbye, don't you" was his retort. "I know the words," I says, "but not the tune." "That's O. K.," he says, "I am going to give you the air." So we argued back and fourth for a little while, and one thing led to another until I finally left him flat.

There was only a short time laps after that when I was driving down Broadway one day, and who should I run into but Charlie Chaplin, the pitcher actor. "Have you seen my last pitcher? "I says, and he says "I hope so"—meaning he wouldn't like to miss it. "Well what do you think of it?" I says. "I'll see if I can tell you," he says, and he lowers his voice as there was ladies passing on the sidewalk at the time.

Well, I would just as leaf tell my readers just what he said but this magazine has got



I and Chaplin. He is on the right. I am offering him a suggestion for a funny situation.



Mr. Chaplin is never too busy to cast a few pearls before his class. Chuck Reisener and I both had note books, but Albert Austin didn't need any because of his wonderful memory. I've got on my other pants—the white ones.

subscribers in Scranton and Pittsburgh, so I can only tell part of it. "Yours is a pitiful case," he says, "and I would like to put you under observation. It looks like deliberate ignorance," he says. "I see that not only do you not know nothing about pitchers—you do not even suspect anything" he says. "Now, if you will come out to my studio," he says, "I will give you some wages and learn you at the same time." Of course I excepted before you could say Carl Robinson. "Where is your studio?" I says. At that he looked kind of funny (he is a natural comedian) and he says, "Well," says he, "it has been some time since I was there myself, and my bumps on location ain't very good." Then he turned to his car which is a Loco too, and he says to Kono, "Do you remember the place you used to drive me to when I was taking a dog's life?" "Well, tell him where it is."

Well, that was about April first, and I don't think it was more than the 4th of July before Charlie himself motors out in great haste about 3 p. m. "Are the extry people made up?" he says, "and where is Edna?" he says. Well, we told him Edna had just foned in that her machine had broke down in San Francisco, and to please excuse her for the day unlest her presents was absolutely required. The extry people would be made up in a few minutes, but what kind did he want, and what kind of a set? "I want them for the scene I was thinking of last night," he says, "and I want them to look like them what d'ye callems—you know — reglar old how-de-do's." Well, we all looked as blank as a prop cartridge—so Charlie says, "I see I ain't gettin' no help," he says, "things is getting lacks around here. You have got to anticipate me, and show some bleedin' initiative. Leave us call this a day," he says, "and have everybody on the set made up tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock a. m.," he says. Well, the next morning we was raring to go and it wasn't only two or three days after that we heard that he had

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Katherine Hilliker is the clever person who writes the entertaining and amusing subtitles for a great number of travel pictures. Don't you remember how pleased you were with the subtitles in "Passion?" Well, Miss Hilliker wrote them. She's an interesting person to know.

Katharine Hilliker—Film Doctor

By GEORGE LANDY

THE spotlight of distinction in the motion picture field has come to rest upon Katharine Hilliker with ever greater intensity during the year just past. And with her titling of "Passion," she has come into her own.

Strictly speaking, however, Katharine Hilliker is more than a film titler or editor —she is a film doctor. To take anywhere from 50,000 to 100,000 feet of negative and make a finished feature photoplay out of this conglomeration of material, is a task that requires not only surgical skill and literary ability, but also that human understanding which is really essential to doctors in every line. Just as on the stage many a play has been revamped from its original construction handed in by the playwright by one of the small group in the theatrical business that know their workmanship—so Katharine Hilliker takes the gross footage on an idea which was perhaps hazily worked out by the author, the continuity writer or the director or all three of them, and sweeping aside all irregularities, brings out a finished artistic product that has dramatic value.

TO be recognized as one of the elect who can really do this for a picture is no mean achievement and is the result of a wide experience. Originally one of the Sunday editors of the San Francisco Call, she became a frequent contributor to a number of magazines and newspaper syndicates. Upon arrival in New York City, Katharine Hilliker first wrote some magazine publicity for Select Pictures Corporation, then became the motion picture editor of the New York Morning Telegraph and during the war held an active office in the Division of Films.

It was while in this service—humanizing and illuminating the War Department's informative reels—that Katharine Hilliker became convinced that travelogues, scenics and other informative subjects could be made interesting. Up to that time they had usually been only "chasers." The truth of her conviction was soon seen in the surprising success of the Outing Chester Scenics in which Katharine Hilliker's titles departed radically from the dry statistical or the shoddily poetical styles and were real gems of wit, humor and humanness. In fact, there came to be a common use of the word HILLIKERISM to describe the twist—a la O. Henry—that her titles possessed. Here is a sample from a Samoan scenic:

"Over against the western skyline where the ocean stacks itself in restless blue surges, we searched for Samoa, the storied realm of adventure and the stronghold of an ancient cannibal race. Vine-hung and palm-fringed we found it, its islands softly jade against the blue of sky and sea."

To prevent, however, any excessive "moonshiny" feeling from bubbling up in the hearts of the audiences, she promptly follows with this characteristic Hillikerism: "It was nice to know that nowadays, with Uncle Sam on the job, we could get an inside line on Samoa without getting Samoa outside of us."

As a matter of fact, Katharine Hilliker's first experience as a film doctor came while she was at Select when she re-edited and retitled "The Lesson," originally Constance Talmadge's first star production but which had been muddled up so effectively by a dozen editors before it got to Mrs. Hilliker that it was not released until about the tenth of Miss Talmadge's pictures for Select. This was a rather spasmodic effort, since immediately after her work on "The Lesson," Mrs. Hilliker went to her editorial desk on the Telegraph and could find no time to devote to films except as a reviewer.

THE success of the Outing Chester Travel Pictures—which was generally recognized throughout the industry as largely creditable to Katharine Hilliker,—soon brought the producers of two-reel comedies to her door, especially when they found themselves stuck at the outset of a much advertised series and wanted to make sure of putting them over. Among the two-reelers whose introductions include the phrase "Titled by Katharine Hilliker"—for she was the first editor of short subjects to receive screen credit for her work—were the first two Torchy Comedies, the initial Toonerville Trolley picture and several others perhaps less well known. Success

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Film Fetters and Fetishes

By KING VIDOR

NOT so long ago I confided to the general public that our organization was as open as a prairie for stories written specifically for the shadow screen. At the same time I gleefully and blithesomely predicted a Purgatorial period for the cinema if the merry lads who hold all the first mortgages persist in demanding the screening of published books and popular plays only. Of course, initial advertising value is a talking point for the kale herders behind the mahogany furniture; but I for one would first look over the features, lines and curves of the delectable tome or playlet, in an endeavor to visualize how the fair creature would look in her screen clothes. Personally I am always in the market for a human interest story, and am not concerned a whit as to whether it belongs to the Book. Play or Original Scenario family.

Most of the pictures I've produced were filmed from original scenarios. It seems to me that the photoplaywright is as necessary as the playwright—for few plays are adapted from books. At the risk of being trite, I will chime in with the old, familiar stuff to the effect that screen-writing is a distinct art, requiring a technique all its own.

I am firmly convinced—signed, sealed and delivered—on the system of photoplay writing taught by the Palmer department of education; yet it seems to me that any observant chap who breezed into the flicker temples with any degree of regularity could figure out how scenarios are written. However, a text-book such as Mr. Palmer's fills a mental need analagous to the physical need filled by a gymnasium. Almost anyone knows a few simple gymnastics which, if applied, would keep him in trim. Dear old human nature is so gloriously weak, however, that the average chap hasn't the will power to exercise on his own hook; he feels that he must have the scientific, exact razmataz of the gymnasium. What the gym actually supplies is the moral stimulus.

THE textbook makes for orderly thought, with its pigeon-holing and tabulating of ideas which might otherwise evanesce. The processes of our beautiful civilization are apt to cause our thoughts to go on jaunts and even sprees; and a textbook transmutes confusion into construction.

Theme and characterization express the soul of a story; and are therefore of paramount consideration. Atmosphere and mood are extremely vital, and the high artistic value of D. W. Griffith's "Broken Blossoms" was more a reflection of theme, characterization, moods and atmosphere than of any ingenious plot. Surely the spell, the charm, the witchery of this photoplay was the result of a magical combination of atmosphere, mood and characterization.

To me, there is a higher art expression possible through theme and characterization than through plot. I believe the tremendous sale of W. Somerset Maugham's book, "The Moon and Sixpence," explodes the theory that plot is of primary importance in intrigueing the reader. This work is practically a biography—and depends almost entirely upon one sustained characterization. It has no plot. Its drama is of the soul.

OF all the pet theories I would like to help explode, there is none more false than that which denies the possibility of the cinema art ever expressing these subtler thoughts and emotions. In an infinite universe there are infinite possibilities. How about the painting art? What terrible power a vivid, suggestive painting exerts upon us! What hidden depths are revealed to us through some magic stroke of a brush! Now, the motion-picture play is a series of several hundred pictures, strung together in narrative and dramatic sequence. Some day, when the motion-picture art is aimed higher than the average man, and Americans are not afraid to look life in the face, we shall have photoplays which will awe with their power and compel through their grandeur and significance.

Today, there is hardly any photodramatist with courage enough to write from his heart and soul. Almost all are fettered with the dread of the pro-censorship people with their antiquated ideas. Our photodramatists too often fear for their bread and butter to produce works of art.

I believe in moral pictures, considering beauty as the highest morality. Our "Main

Streeters" are forever confounding traditions and conventions with morals—and art will ever be marred according to the extent of their influence. The pictorial beauty of some photoplays is surely a moral force, just as fine music or poetry is. But the pro-censorship folks won't and can't recognize this; in fact, they are as a class stolid materialists who know nothing of fine music or poetry. They are the sort of folks—well meaning and conscientious enough—who would have deleted the "Betty Compson in the bathtub" scene from "The Miracle Man"; or petitioned the city council to prevent the showing of "Broken Blossoms." All is bad which they can not comprehend. They are human marsh-fowls unable to grasp the viewpoints of the few eagles who soar high above them. I do not wish to condemn these folks; the marsh-fowl is not responsible — in the last analysis —for his nature. I do wish to indicate what are in my opinion some of the negative influences affecting the photodramatist.



King Vidor needs no introduction to photoplaywrights. Here he is at the mighty chilly job of directing a snow scene in "The Sky Pilot." The man behind the camera is Gus Peterson.

I would like to see some photoplaywright execute a scenario comparable to the Jekyll and Hyde story. Stevenson's allegory of the human soul, touching the hidden springs, revealed Humanity to itself. The revelation of these innermost recesses, the far-away corners of consciousness, constitutes far more of a thrill than the sight of a cowboy tossed off a cliff. This story makes us realize not only our immortal souls, but our mortal animal ancestry. Its spiritual lesson is superb. It makes us realize the fact that the same power evolves the saint, the great statesman, the murderer, the drunkard, and the harlot. Human brotherhood is ushered in on the wings of the sublime emotion that whispers of our oneness with saints, outcasts, and criminals. We glimpse the fact that we might, under certain psychological conditions, rise to the heights of the saint or sink to the depths of degradation.

What drama worthier of the photoplaywright's utmost resources and efforts than the immortal drama of the soul, the eternal conflict between Jekyll and Hyde, between spirit and matter.

I sincerely hope that the photodramatists of today and tomorrow turn over a new leaf and scorn to prostitute their art for propaganda purposes, whether cloaked as patriotism on the one hand or humanitarianism on the other. The screen need not be devoted to the advancement of political theories. Genuine humanitarianism does not have to wear a badge to be recognized. The same goes for genuine patriotism.

Much buncombe has been penned and typed regarding the dear old public's predilections. Who are the public? Why so much piffle about happy endings? I have a little hunch that the public's taste for the photodramatic art is determined within a limited noodle of some Wall Street promoter. The public will patronize good, human, artistic photoplays, regardless of the status of the principal characters during the final flickers.

I'd like to see a photodramatist rise up who would give to the screen what Hugo, Flaubert, Blazac, Poe and Stevenson gave to literature—or what Conrad, Dreiser, or Gorki are giving. Such writers as Chekhov and Andreyev, and such playwrights as Moliere, Hauptmann, Maeterlinck, Barrie, Wilde and Shaw might well be studied by our contemporaneous screen writers. Think

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Facing the Future

By FREDERICK PALMER

MAIN Street—The Pastime Picture Emporium—the blue eyed, pompadoured, gum chewing blonde in the ticket booth—the plaster paris Cupids over the entrance—the indifferent pianist, sometimes assisted by an energetic drummer who rattled shot in a tin pan whenever a water scene was shown—the illustrated songs, sung by an asthmatic tenor—and worst of all, the pictures. And all these less than a score of years ago.

Remember the first pictures? Most of them were imported from France, showing railroad trains, horses, fire engines and such like. Twenty minutes of this brand of entertainment was sufficient to drive one from a theater on the verge of total blindness. The old three-inch film flopped through the projection machine and past the lens as awkwardly as the chain of an auto truck flops over the sprocket. Then came a gradual refinement of the mechanical end of motion pictures and we went to see John Bunny, Bronco Billy, the Biograph shows and Charlie Chaplin in Essanay productions with less unpleasant after effects.

D. W. Griffith made us all sit up and take notice when he introduced the "fade out" and "close up" and other equally important innovations until today we go to a photoplay taking the mechanical part of pictures as a matter of course.

Had it not been for this improvement of films, camera and projection machines, the moving picture could never have become the permanent institution that it is. Today one may sit through the exhibition of ten or twelve reels and emerge from the theater minus the headache that used to result inevitably from a short visit to the old nickelodeon.

THE earliest motion pictures were produced by directors from the speaking stage and it never occurred to them to use any methods but those they had been accustomed to. Instead of taking the camera out in front of some conveniently located house and obtaining scenes absolutely true to life, they laboriously constructed houses, fences, etc., after the old stage methods.

When one compares these crude beginnings of motion pictures with the superb realism of the productions of today, the marvelous progress that has been made through the past decade becomes strikingly apparent.

Let's right about face. What of the motion pictures of the future?

I don't think we need to bother our heads about mechanics of the photoplay. Even if they develop no further than they are at the present, the motion picture as it is today is efficient enough to project any story we have got to tell.

Who is up to? You—the photodramatist!

It is up to you to improve the quality of photoplay plot composition and the technique of screen story telling. The efforts of the director, camera man and projectionist, combined with the playwright will eventually give us better pictures than we have ever dreamed of.

But as I said before, it is up to the photodramatist to infuse new ideas, new blood and new methods into the screen.

I AM going to digress for a few paragraphs in order to remind you of some things you already know.

The majority of folks are rather impatient.

You like to do things and get them out of the way and you want to see results from your efforts—at once. Or you put things off till the very last minute and then hurry them through hoping by some chance they will get by. Spasmodic spurts will never get a load up hill. It takes a long steady pull. And if there is any occupation or avocation that requires continued effort, it is the writing of photoplays.

Don't think I am trying to preach. I am not. I merely state these facts so you will not get discouraged.

Photoplay writing is creative work. A good screen drama must be built incident upon incident. It takes time to do it properly for you have got to fit all the pieces of business together to make a perfect whole. You must write—and then re-write.

And when you have got it all finished, then comes the true test of your courage. You send your story away—it comes back. You send it somewhere else—it comes back—and so on ad infinitum. If you have the

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What Do They Want?

By GERTRUDE BARNUM

WHAT do they want, the motley couples waiting before the Movie Theaters in lines which reach away up and down the sidewalks? The single women who file in all through the day and evening, the country-bred grandfather and grandmother, the city tough locked from the saloon, the lady of the streets, the anxious parent, the hall-room boys, the matinee girls, what do they all want; rich men, poor men, beggarmen, thieves, old maids, young maids, mothers and wives? It is worth asking, for this is our "Public" —in a more complete representation than any other agency in all time ever has gathered together. Do they want "dope," want to forget and dream? Do they want nourishment, hungering for sustenance which cannot be gathered in their own limited fields? Do they search for a key to the universe, to the deep mysteries of life and death?

This brief skit relates to the sorts of plays to be properly selected for the truly democratic audiences of our cinema theaters.

A similar problem presented itself a generation ago to Theodore Thomas, in Chicago, when his orchestra played in a great barn of an Exposition Building, to the hoy polloy. Said his advisers: "The tired business man and the wooden-headed mob agree. What the big push wants is ragtime and 'Juanita'."

"They are progressives then, like all of us," Thomas replied, "for the big push once voted for tom toms," or words to that effect. Thomas proved himself a strong democrat among musical leaders, having faith in the crowd to give it the best that it progressively wanted, being sure that eventually it would clamor—as it did—for the very best to be found in the whole world of music of that day.

LET us admit the common need of all of us for "dope" at times, forgetfulness and dreams. Hail then, the picture which rubs Alladin's Lamp, carries us to fairyland, and brings us back refreshed by a bath of beauty. Nourishment too, we must have, to strengthen and stimulate our intellectual and emotional centers, so that we shall react in daily life with more vitality and poetry than our hairy simean brothers. Perhaps most of all, in this irreligious age, spiritual light is necessary to our continuance on the steep paths of this great adventure, life. The dangerous fault, however, of the great run of picture plays today is that they are "made-up" mixtures of poisonous narcotics, artificial stimuli and fake mysticism, which drive our flocks not out beside green pastures and still waters, but into blind alleys and beside stagnant and festering pools.

Bona fide fairy tales are admirable, but when the modern Beauty, by artificial plots, is encouraged to accept fine raiment from the Beast, free of charge, is it not inevitable that her sense of actual values should become blurred? And will not the result be that the real girl pays a heavy price for this raiment in the close-up in real life? Fortunately, already many producers are advertising for scenarios "with true-to-life situations."

A MORAL to every play would be depressing. The reformer, degrading Art to be hand-maiden to his particular propaganda, is rightfully foredoomed to failure. But why may not we ask that a heroine's courage, faith and ingenuity occasionally be shown to work out well when applied to her own husband? Why need he always be shot, so that her illicit love may be justified in the end? Why should there not be some convincing reason for the hero's love for a girl besides her expensive low-backed dresses? (Incidentally, it may be said that this country, having spent in 1920, twenty-two billions, seven hundred millions of dollars in luxuries, has "done that" and is looking for another sort of thrill.) Passion we may normally approve on the screen, not in forms of morbid dissipation, but as the flowering of creative impulse. We quarrel with the "daring dress" of movie stars only when its motive is obscene; the chaste nudity of a Venus, the audacious breeches of the young girl hiker shock only grandmas. Revolt for freedom, America will always "fan" with enthusiasm, provided the new course leads through fresh air to hills, dales and mountains, not back to the close, if perfumed, air of the harem.

Modern and home-grown dramas are in

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"The Reason Why"

By ELIZABETH EASTON

FULL of self-pity over repeated failures in scenario writing and convinced that of all the Palmer students I was the most handicapped, I have at times (temper-meant-fully) tossed my copy of The Photoplaywright into the waste-basket, unopened, with a distinct "Get-thee-behind-me-Satan" satisfaction.

It seemed to serve no other purpose than to waste my time—draw me on and on like the oats before the donkey's nose. It stirred up an actual heart-ache over my inability to get in line with the writing world. (I must not forget to interpolate that invariably I fished the copy out and devoured it with increased interest, as I have just done the March number.)

And now, since you have given us space in which to get the fruits of our bitter-sweet experiences out of our systems, I shall welcome each copy—they bring a sense of comforting fellowship—like a warm understanding handclasp, not only with the successful members, but especially with those who still labor and wait.

These, I would remind—as I am constantly reminding myself—that the leaves on the tree of knowledge unfold according to the soil. Do not fret if they seem a bit late in the season—but rather, dig a little at the cause—loosen up the roots as the author of "Egotism and Indolence" has done for our benefit. Let the sere experiences fall away to enrich the soil for the new crop. And profit, as I mean to do, by Mrs. Lawler's systematic study of the subject. I thank them both for the help they have given me. It is with the humble desire to help that I am going to unearth the grub-worms which ate at the roots of my work—possibly they are the same specie which cause the blight on your fruit.

I TAKE issue, however, with the "Self-Analyst's" assertion that she broke the record for preparing Masterpieces. I am quite sure that no one ever set so blithely to work as I did—no one ever possessed a more pronounced case of "meitis."

Indeed, my only concern was lest the market become too soon glutted with my own works, and having turned on the spiggot of this intoxicating outlet for my creative brain, the thought of shutting it off even for a spell was distressing.

It was not until after repeated failures that I paused long enough to wonder why I was writing—and what for? Then I realized that my work, like that mentioned in "Potterism," was but a "confusion of self-expression."

During the long pauses, or growing periods, which followed came the answers.

First I wrote for the pure joy of expression, coupled with the hope that in time it would lead to the actual mingling and exchanging of thought with others who were writing. This want is being largely supplied by The Photodramatist.

LATER I entertained dreams of bowing to the plaudits of an enthusiastic public—a thing, in my saner moments, I shouldn't enjoy doing in the least.

Stung now by the covert sneers of friends and family, a mad determination to "show 'em" lashed me on.

Then the money side took possession. It became an obsession. I suddenly found myself without confidence in my hitherto source of supply, and believed it imperative that I stoke the family purse. Oh, how hard I toiled! And waited.

I finally grew lazy and indifferent—and broke the command Miss Bradley King gave us. Why laboriously strive to write out a technically perfect scenario—only to have it returned with the advice to lay it aside? The best authors had their works rebuilt—why should I mind? I didn't—and they all came back.

I was simply experimenting—just writing to be writing.

Not one legitimate reason or right incentive. Finally it dawned on me that if I did not have something to say it were better to keep silent. And I can't even do that.

The conflict raging between the National Censorship and the Movie Interests has, I believe, given us all an impulse to work harder. My opinion in regard to the censorship was on the fence until The Photoplaywright declared it a menace to creative impulse. I believed in the Palmer people, and still——

With two young daughters to rear and

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Individualize Your Characters

By ALAN PUTNAM

ALL art is of man, for man and by man. Man realizes his ideal, not through himself but through his art. In art he creates and puts into being all that he himself lacks.

The ancient sculptor imaged huge figures performing feats that were beyond the power of man. He visualized the gods in forms of great beauty, possessing superhuman strength. The painters recorded their ideals of beauty and the poets sang songs of the brave adventurer.

And so it is with all art. Through its powerful influence we can dream of the things that we ourselves would like to be. We see our ideal, performing acts of bravery, always triumphant over evil.

The motion picture has come into its own largely because of its ability to visualize our ideal. It pictures to us what we are; what we should be and what we would like to be. It is the magic mirror which is held before our eyes and although we are clothed in rags and tatters, we see our reflection in silks and satins, surrounded by all that we crave.

It inspires in us the hope that we, too, may have and do the things that the hero and heroine have accomplished.

It is unquestionably an art, born from the labors of all other arts and appropriating all that is best from them.

The writer of the photoplay faces a tremendous task, for his is the creative end. All the rest is interpretive.

It is the screen author whose imaginative genius supplies the very essence of the photoplay. Regardless of how great the acting, how able the directing or how beautiful the photography, if the story is not well done the whole production is unsatisfactory. On the other hand, a powerful drama can be greatly manhandled by the actors. director and camera man and still hold its own.

And what makes a powerful drama?

IF we depend solely upon theme and plot to inject greatness into our story we find a well gleaned field. Ever since "Homer smote his bloomin' lyre," every theme has been used time and again. The thirty-six dramatic situations have been used in almost every possible combination. What is the answer?

The delineation of character!

When you create a photoplay, you do not create a theme or plot alone—you create a group of living personalities that live in the minds and hearts of their beholders. *You evolve a series of circumstances and then create an individual (the hero) strong enough to overcome them.*

This character is your ideal. In him is embodied all the attributes that go to make him triumphant over the obstacles you have put in his path. He may be of lowly origin. He may not be perfect in many ways, but there must be some qualities inherent in him which make him a personality and not a mere puppet.

A CRAFTSMAN imitates a type, but a true artist creates a personality. There have been many painters greater than Leonardo de Vinci, but none have equaled his "Mona Lisa" as a work of art. This picture—a simple portrait of a woman—fairly radiates life. It is a personality.

We gaze upon group after group, sculptured in various attitudes, depicting some climax of life and then turn to Michelangelo's "David"—an unassuming figure of a youth—which awes us with its marvelous portrayal of sheer character or individualism.

De Maupassant's "The Necklace" contains the simplest kind of plot and yet competent critics have proclaimed it a masterpiece of short story writing because of the powerful delineation of character.

The same principle applies to writing for the screen. A great photodrama does not need a complex theme or an intricate plot but it must have personalities, not types.

A child inherits certain mental and physical characteristics from his parents which affect his entire life.

Some of these characteristics, lying dormant do not come to the surface for years, or they may never make their appearance. All through life a person's character is being changed for better or worse. These changes are brought about by environment, education, occupation and accident, all working together with whatever inborn

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THE PHOTODRAMATIST

A Magazine for Photoplay Writers

Issued monthly by the Department of Education of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation.

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What Is Happening to the Motion Picture Industry

THE motion picture industry, like every other, is subject to general financial and business conditions. As this great and comparatively new institution stands among the first five industries of the United States, it is only natural that it should be affected to a great extent by any depression.

During the past four or five months there has been a general commercial slump—a perfectly natural reaction after our orgy of spending. Money has been tight. This condition affected the production of pictures.

Practically all of the important producing companies are controlled by big, New York interests and they, in keeping with their other activities, held down expenses in every direction. Many studios were closed for weeks at a time and others cut down their working forces to a very small percentage of normal.

These facts led to widespread rumors of one kind or another. It was whispered about, that people were losing interest in pictures. Wild tales were told of how all the larger companies had warehouses chock full of unreleased films and how this overproduction had ruined the industry. Another favorite cry was that foreign producers were flooding the U. S. with cheap films.

After an investigation we can authoritively brand each of these rumors as being absolutely false. They have no foundation whatever. The one and only reason for the comparatively short period of the slowing down of production was the temporary tightness of the money market.

Let's take up these rumors one by one. Are people losing interest in the photoplay?

The annual report of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation is excellent evidence of the facts. Their net earnings for 1920 after taxes were deducted, were $5,377,129 as compared with $3,132,985 for 1919. Earnings so far in 1921 are at an even better rate than 1920.

In spite of the general business depression, the statistics of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, as well as practically all of the other large producing companies, shows no decline in the motion picture industry and no indication of a falling off.

On the contrary, numerous signs indicate that public interest in photoplays is on the increase. Estimated box office receipts for motion picture theatres for 1920 were $730,000,000 as against $640,000,000 in 1919 and $502,000,000 in 1918. Receipts of motion picture theatres in 1920 were more than four times the receipts of all other kinds of theatres. There are at present approximately 19,000 motion picture theatres in the United States and more than 23,000 additional motion picture theatres throughout the rest of the world. This makes a total of something over 42,000 picture theatres now being supplied.

In regard to over-production, we know that practically every film produced has been released almost immediately. We are always in very close touch with what is being produced and we do not know of one important production that has been withheld from the public.

And as far as fearing an invasion from foreign film fields—it is too absurd. Statistics show that over 80 per cent of films of the world are produced in this country. Even if foreign manufacturers should send over every film that they made, it would hardly make a ripple. Certainly it wouldn't stop our own superior output.

We have absolutely nothing to worry about from the foregoing rumors. We need only concern ourselves with the financial end of the business. The following items

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Letters and Comment

THE editor of this publication wishes that he personally could thank each and every reader who has sent in his or her anti-censorship petition. As this is physically impossible, he takes this opportunity to express his appreciation of the wonderful co-operation he has received in the battle.

We are sure that if every organization or body came to the front with the enthusiasm and promptness of the readers of this publication, these censorship agitators would surrender without a struggle.

Why, one fellow has asked for petitions enough to sign up an entire town of 8000 inhabitants. The Northern California Theaters Association has pledged us their co-operation and will circulate the petitions in almost every theater in Northern California.

But we still need more names. We must present overwhelming evidence that the great public is against censorship, and the only evidence we *can* present are these signed petitions.

As Mr. Palmer says in his article, "Keep at it." Let's have more names, and then some more.

If you realized what an important weapon we have in these petitions, we are sure you would exert every effort not only to get one form filled, but a dozen or more.

Let's settle this censorship question once and for all. If this government is "of the people, by the people and for the people," let us, as the people, make our wants known so emphatically that our law-making bodies can have no other choice but to throw all censorship bills into the waste-basket where they most certainly belong.

If you have mislaid your petition forms, write for more. They are gratis. We will send them to you, but remember—"Keep at it."

Dear Editor:

I am enclosing two paragraphs taken from the March number of "The New Success," a New York publication, written by A Successful Scenario Author (no name given).

"This leads to another vital suggestion. Don't take your ideas from the newspapers or things you see in print. Don't rely too much on 'personal experiences' of friends. Others may see and develop the same idea, or you may be developing an idea that has been done before. Then you may be accused of plagiarism. Once that occurs, your writing days are over.

"It is this danger of innocent or unconscious plagiarism that makes the scenario editor wary of the unknown writer. He must have the word of some one he knows, and can trust, to assure him of the first-hand *originality* of the script. Libel suits have resulted where screen editors have been imposed upon by unscrupulous plot-stealers or innocent offenders who unconsciously committed literary piracy."

It is true that there are many dramas being enacted all around us and that a person with ingenuity could make use of them in the writing of stories. It is also true that many beginners make good use of newspaper information in writing successful stories which are not challenged by other writers. What is one person's fortune in this respect is another's loss.

I am sure that you who are experienced in the technique of the photoplay and in the gathering of material for screen stories will refute these statements for the benefit of the readers of your magazine.

Very truly yours,

CHARLES J. HAUSMAN.

The opinion of A Successful Scenario Author is interesting because it has long been a bone of contention. The anonymous gentleman has expressed himself forcefully, but not quite accurately. His use of the word "originality" is rather perplexing. There is no such thing, in any real sense, as "first-hand originality" when we consider plot material. Originality is the quality that comes from an author's treatment of his material, even though the material itself is thoroughly trite. William Shakespeare, who was a rather competent writer in his day, never created an original plot. He borrowed from history, from earlier writers, from all conceivable sources. But he wrote better plays than anyone who had preceded him.

Get your ideas wherever you come upon them experience or observe, from hearsay reports, from the great book of life itself. Then give them your own individual treatment, see them through your own eyes, develop them in your way, and your work will possess the magic quality of originality and you will not bear the stigma of plagiarism.—THE EDITOR.

Dear Editor:

I am greatly pleased to meet you under such advantageous possibilities. It is surely a great privilege to every Palmer Plan student.

Since receiving criticisms of two of my photoplay stories, I am more than ever impressed with

the reason of conceit in the would-be photoplay dramatist.

An author's first play is to him much like a mother's first baby is to her—perfect and without a flaw. She does not see the little wrinkled, red face; her baby is to her mind, the embodiment of beauty.

An author, when he has created his first play, sees in it a masterpiece. He sees a crowded theatre and great applause. He sees himself notorious and much sought after; and, while he is so taken up with his power to create, he looses sight of the ugliness of his creation. He is not fair enough with himself to thinkingly criticise his play. That is why when it is returned to him with advice to "lay it aside," he is disappointed and hurt, feeling that others do not appreciate its worth.

It is the disinterested criticism that spurs a man to success. Why? Because it is honest and therefore just.

I feel that when the Advisory Bureau criticises a student's work, it is with a disinterested and just criticism. By this I do not mean that the Bureau has no interest in the subject under criticism. On the contrary, it seems to me that the members of the Advisory Bureau examine a student's work with much the same feeling with which they would examine the fruit on a fruit tree; they readily recognize the good fruit from the bad, and will preferably pick the good.

If a man or woman has talent, they cannot help but succeed under the supervision of the Palmer staff. But they must study and work and form the habit of disinterested criticism.

I have not succeeded as yet, nor can I see success hurrying toward me; but I feel that I shall succeed if I accept the Advisory Bureau's criticisms and apply them to my work.

Very sincerely yours,
ELLA LOOMIS THURSTON.

Screenland Announces Scenario Contest

SCREENLAND, a magazine published in Hollywood, will award prizes to the six best scenario synopses submitted to the Contest Editor before August 15. There will be two sets of prizes—one for comedies, the other for dramas.

The first prize in each set will be $25. The second prize will be $15. The third prize will be $10.

Each synopsis must contain *no more* than 1000 words. Write it in brief, interesting form. There is no limit to the brevity with which your synopsis may be blessed.

The winners will be chosen by a board including Frank E. Woods, Chief Supervising Director, Famous Players-Lasky West Coast Studios; J. G. Hawks, Managing Editor, Goldwyn Studios; John Blackwood, Story Editor, Universal Film Corporation, and the editors of Screenland. The winners' names will be announced in the October issue of Screenland.

At least two of the best synopses submitted each month will be published in the June, July, August and September issues of Screenland, and the copyrights therein released direct to the authors. Thus, every scenario printed in this magazine will secure clear title to motion picture rights for the author.

Address your manuscripts to the Contest Editor, Screenland Magazine, Markham Building, Hollywood, Calif.

Want Collaborators

The following Palmer students desire to get in touch with other students in their respective communities for the purpose of collaboration or mutual study

Akron, Ohio: B. Blair Young, 968 Bell St.
Brooklyn, N. Y.: Charles J. Hausman, 492 Greene Ave.
Chicago, Ill.: F. W. Ickes, 1221 E. 65th St.
Cleveland, Ohio: Emil J. Mauek, 3468 West Forty-ninth St.
Detroit, Mich.: Harold R. Knapp, 539 Melbourne Ave.
Duluth, Minn.: Jack Jones, Jr., Hermantown Road.
East Palestine, Ohio: S. Mack Williams, Box 323.
Elgin, Ill.: Elmer E. Schenet, 766 E. Chicago Ave.
Hiawasse, Ga.: Walter E. Warren, Box 76.
Jersey City, N. J.: Estelle Max, 290 Jackson Ave.
Kansas City, Mo.: Aline L. Hayes, 3535 College Ave.
Little Falls, N. Y.: Mrs. Mary E. Stewart Evans, 332 So. Ann St.
London, England: Jack Couzens, 1 Stokenchurch St., Fulham, S. W. 6.
Los Angeles, Cal.: Mrs. Leo Lehmann, 315½ Gertrude St.
Minneapolis, Minn.: Vera Smith Greenough, 4841 Lyndale Ave., South.
Missoula, Mont.: Leo Bernard Mayotte, Shapard Hotel.
Montreal, Quebec: Bruce Wilkin, 2621 Hutchison St.
New Brighton, Staten Isl. N. Y.: Carl L. Grupen, 17 St. Marks Place.
New York, N. Y.: David W. Alpha, 512 West 140 St.
New Haven, Conn.: M. S. Yerkovich, 67 Fourth St.
New York, N. Y.: Charles G. Scholz, 2471 Davidson Ave.
New York, N. Y.: D. W. Alpha, 522 West 140th St.
Omaha, Neb.: Frank E. Parkins, 6309 Binney St.
Parkersburg, Pa.: Oric C. Peters, 328 First St.
Pittsburgh, Pa.: Louis B. Markell, 558 Allison Ave.
Cebu, Cebu, P. I.: Mr. Francisco Yap, P. O. B. 247.
Porterville, Pa.: Norman G. Wimer, R. F. D. No. 3.
Portland, Ore.: Miss Anna Finkelstein, 605 Fifth St.
Passaic, N. J.: Mary M. Yokank, 43 Dayton Ave.
Ranger, Tex.: J. A. Cowart, Box 1281.
San Francisco, Cal.: Claud Suggs, 718 Howard St.
Springfield, Mo.: Lillian Martin, 1014 N. Boulevard.
St. Louis, Mo.: Clarence F. Striegel, 6179 Westminster Place.
Syracuse, N. Y.: John R. Roock, 106 Hier Ave.
Washington, D. C.: Mrs. Rose B. Rehlander, 1405 Rhode Island Ave.

Photoplays in Review

By Criticus Criticorum

"THE FOUR HORSEMEN"

(Rex Ingram Production; released by Metro; all-star cast; adapted by June Mathis from the widely known novel by Vicente Blasco Ibanez.)

SYNOPSIS

Madariaga, a Spaniard, emigrates to the Argentine, where he amasses a fortune. His two daughters are married, one to a Frenchman, Desnoyers, the other to a German, von Hartrott. The French side of the family have two children, a girl, Chichi, and a boy, Julio, who is the idol of his grandfather and who is led into loose ways by him. The von Hartrotts have three sons, typically German.

Madariaga dies and leaves his fortune to his two daughters. The rancho is sold and the two families return to their own countries, the one to Germany, the other to France.

The von Hartrotts receive high honors at the hands of the kaiser, while the Desnoyers are none too happy. The father is miserly except in the purchase of art treasures for a castle on the Marne that he has acquired. Julio, who had fallen into bad habits in the Argentine, continues his checkered career in the Montmartre, ostensibly as an artist, but in reality he frequents the Tango Palace, where he is all the rage, due to his dancing ability learned in Buenos Aires.

His father's rather elderly friend Laurier has a young and charming wife Marguerite. She and Julio fall in love and hold clandestine meetings at the studio of Julio. Laurier discovers this through an anonymous letter and challenges Julio. Then the war breaks in all its fury, and before Laurier can arrange for the duel, he is called to his commission in the army.

Julio, being an Argentine, does not have to enlist and while the rest of France is saddened, continues his dancing and wineing. Marguerite learns nursing and leaves, and the elder Desnoyers having sent his family to a place of safety, goes to his castle on the Marne. Soon the German hordes sweep down on the little village and raze it. The castle has been spared since it is to be made headquarters of the German general. Here comes one of Desnoyers' nephews as a captain in the German artillery, but true to his training and army education he casts aside the old man when he appeals to him to help save his treasures.

A wild revel follows. One of the brutal officers looks with covetous eyes on the daughter of the lodgekeeper, and is killed by her father. Before the next day breaks the French retrieve the lost sector on the Marne. The Germans are driven out, but in the battle the castle is demolished, while heartbroken Desnoyers watches it fall into ruins.

Over Julio's studio lives The Stranger, a calm unperturbed man with the sorrows of all the world painted on his visage. He tells Julio of the terrible horsemen of the Apocalypse, Conquest, War, Famine and Death, who ride in the wake of the beast, Hate.

In the meantime, Julio has found his Marguerite in a hospital in Lourdes, and to his amazement finds that she is nursing her husband who is blind. The war has taught its lesson, and she sends Julio away, telling him that their love was wrong, and that she is going to atone for it by remaining with her husband and caring for him. This, together with The Stranger's words, sends Julio to enlist.

Another battle, and Julio crosses No Man's Land and in the German trenches meets his cousin. Each has a pistol trained on the other, and then a shell sends them together into the great Eternity.

And the picture ends with the Four Horsemen madly galloping away. "But," says The Stranger, "they will come back again and again until hate has been wiped away and love rules the world."

REVIEW

"The Four Horsemen" is one of the greatest and most notable screen productions ever made. It should receive the serious attention of every photoplaywright, for there has been no better example this year of the possibilities of the screen as a pictorial and dramatic medium. Here is one of the greatest novels of recent years translated to an entirely different medium and bettered in the translation. The picture is a living, human play. Every character lives, breathes and moves as he did in life. The play should be studied especially because of the distinctive characterization, the complications of the story that are all combined in clear sequence to express the mighty and universal theme, and the sheer artistry of its technique.

"The Four Horsemen" is to screen productions what Shakespeare and Ibsen are to stage drama. It is not to be expected that every picture will be of equal merit, or that every story will come up to this high standard of dramatic art. But from the finest examples of the art we can learn how to build our own humble efforts. We can set ourselves a high ideal and strive to attain it.

It would be unwise for beginners to attempt to write a "Four Horsemen" without first mastering technique in simpler and less ambitious efforts, just as June Mathis and Rex Ingram did. But only by mastering technique, only by starting humbly and with real respect for the possibilities of the new art of the screen, can one prepare oneself to write such a play.

We would urge every student of the photodrama to view the picture at least once. If possible, see it through three or four times. Study its characterization, the use of symbols, the development and treatment of the various complicated strands of action, the sequence structure of the picture as a whole.

"DON'T NEGLECT YOUR WIFE"

(Goldwyn Production; all-star cast; from an original photoplay by Gertrude Atherton; scenario by Louis Sherwin; directed by Wallace Worsley.)

SYNOPSIS

"Don't Neglect Your Wife" is said to be a true story that occurred in the social circles of San Francisco, and concerns the love of a successful writer and editor, Langdon Masters, for the neglected wife of Doctor Howard Talbot, an aristocrat from the South. The pair renounce ever seeing each other again when they discover they are in love, but the neglected husband, aroused at last, demands that Masters abandon his promising newspaper career and leave San Francisco. He accepts the sentence and drifts to New York's notorious "Five Points," where he is saved from utter degradation and restored to a life of usefulness by Mrs. Talbot, after her husband had divorced her for running away from him.

REVIEW

Even from so brief an account of the essential plot of Mrs. Atherton's first story written directly for the screen one discerns that it is hackneyed. A view of the production itself reveals many other faults.

Mrs. Atherton has written scores of successful and good novels. She is one of America's leading writers. She is a mistress of style, fine writing and character delineation. She is an admirable fictionist. But in her first original photoplay she fails utterly in developing material that is effective and screenable. As many other "eminent authors" have already done, Mrs. Atherton experiences the confusion and amazement that comes to any one who believes that screen writing is a mere branch of printed fiction or stage plays. She has discovered that it requires a very different and a new technique, and she has discovered in her first failure that all of her training and experience avail her nothing in this new art. She must start, if she is ever to succeed as a photoplaywright, on exactly the same basis as the humblest struggling beginner. In fact, it may be more difficult for her and other fiction writers because they must forget so much in acquiring a practical knowledge of the new technique.

Don't let the advent of "eminent authors" into the motion picture industry discourage you. They are under a handicap and one feels sorry for Mrs. Atherton, an eminent success in her own field, when she fails so utterly in this. You have a better chance than she, or just as good a chance. The producers are learning every day that great reputations and great names do not assure the merit of a photoplay; more and more they are looking not to the writers of fine novels or stage plays but to the man and woman who as yet have not arrived but who have gotten the "screen slant." And that is the Palmer student's opportunity.

Edwin Schallert, in the Los Angeles Times, says of Mrs. Atherton's first produced photoplay:

"'Don't Neglect Your Wife' is a Gertrude Atherton picture. There is nothing in it that will add to the stature of her fame. It is absolutely asinine.

"About the middle of the picture the stupidities begin, when the neglected wife, having fallen in love with a newspaper editor and being forced by her husband to bid him farewell, commences to take dope because the lover is drinking himself to death. She maunders around hopelessly and helplessly in a cafe waiting for something to happen. A friend of the husband's recounts his various exploits and adventures in the Five Points district in New York, the settings and atmosphere of which seem the principal excuse for the picture as a whole. Finally, the lady decides to go to New York and get "her man." When she finally locates him they have a knockdown and drag-out session, and she floors a messy competitor and wins in the neck-and-neck. And while in the final close-up we are justified in the suspicion that the lady is about to become a bigamist or something worse, we welcome the end.

"The talents of such people as Lewis Stone, Charles Clary and Mabel Julienne Scott are wasted on such a picture—but with what opportunities they are given they apparently do their durndest to make you believe that the thing could happen, somehow. The realism of the Five Points dens of horror is depressingly vivid, while some of the outdoor settings might have drawn their inspiration from the nature painter, Keith. The costumes and interiors are in splendid taste. But when the story is awry—as it certainly is in "Don't Neglect Your Wife,"—what do such things avail?"

Where Mrs. Atherton has failed, because she has written as a novelist rather than a screen dramatist, you who master screen technique and get the screen angle will succeed. Not the "eminent authors," but the humble students of the present will be the photoplaywrights of tomorrow.

"A PERFECT CRIME"

(Allan Dwan Production; featuring Monte Blue; adapted and directed by Allan Dwan from a story by Carl Clausen.)

SYNOPSIS

Wally Griggs, who plans "The Perfect Crime," is a bank worker, who passes up small chances for the sake of the big opportunity. He waits to make one big haul. He is a worm in the bank, but in the suburbs, where the bank president, Halliday, makes his home, Wally is "James Brown," a dashing young sport whose tales of wild adventure, primarily designed to win the interest of Halliday, attract the interest of a publisher who promises to put them into a book. Wally loves Mary, who has been done out of her father's fortune by Thaine, now district attorney, who seeks to press his unwelcome attentions upon her. Wally cannot marry on $63 a month and support a young sister. His chance comes when he is given bonds to the value of $25,000 to deliver. He hides them in the vaults and disappears, to reappear as Brown. He court's Thaine's suspicions and when he is arrested and given a third degree he sues for false imprisonment. Thaine is forced by the mayor to compromise the suit out of his own pocket, which brings Mary's money back to her. Then Wally returns the bank funds, pretending aphasia, and lives happily ever after with Mary on the proceeds of his new book.

REVIEW

The plot of "The Perfect Crime" is a very ingenious and cleverly developed one. In a sense it makes use of familiar ingredients, but it combines them in a totally new way. The idea of the poor bank worker living another life and winning the girl under other conditions gives the story a breezy and wholesome note of romance that would be difficult to equal. And the manner in which he conceives and executes the perfect crime, and the reasons for him being a temporary criminal, are excellent. As an example of adroit and clever plotting the story is an unusual and splendid example.

It should be borne in mind, however, that despite the unusual plot twists the plot springs entirely from character and character conflicts. If it is subjected to close analysis it will be seen that the crime idea is the perfectly natural result of the central character's position and his love for the girl. It would have been a very inferior production if the plot had been artificially imposed upon the characters. Only when the plot springs directly from character conflicts is the illusion of reality created.

Many photoplaywrights make the mistake of trying to make the plot tell the characters rather than making the characters tell the story. However a plot idea comes into the mind of the author, in the finished photoplay it should appear as the natural, logical and indeed inevitable result of the interplay of characters. And, of course, the characters should be thoroughly human and convincing; otherwise the story they tell will be unconvincing.

"The Perfect Crime" is a clear and helpful example of the use of this fundamental dramatic principle.

"THE FAITH HEALER"

(Paramount Production; all-star cast; directed by George Melford; adapted by Mrs. W. V. Moody and Z. W. Covington from the stage play by William Vaughn Moody.)

SYNOPSIS

Michaelis, a shepherd, who has become a faith healer through his complete trust in Divine Power, meets and falls in love with Rhoda Williams, a young girl who has lived in sin with a prominent physician in a distant city. Rhoda is the niece of a woman who has been restored to health by the shepherd, and sufferers have gathered from miles around in front of the woman's home, praying to the healer to invoke a miracle and heal them. Michaelis attempts to do so and finds his power gone. Rhoda, believing his love for a sinful woman to be the cause of the shepherd's failure, proclaims her unworthiness before the multitude.

But their resentment is all against the faith healer. They charge him with being a fakir and stone him from the village. The shepherd himself believes his love for Rhoda has taken away his spiritual strength, but after she comes to him and shows him the depth of her affection he knows that it was his want of faith in the strength of true love that had deprived him of his power. An infant is restored to life as the light reaches his own heart, and he takes Rhoda into his arms and tells her they are never to be separated again.

REVIEW

"'The Faith Healer' is a preachment for those who go to the theatre for moral uplift alone, and the highly cultivated mind of its author could not fashion it into a popular success. The story hinges on the power of a mortal, through God, to perform miracles and restore life to the dead. That side of the matter need not be discussed here. The picture fails of its purpose as dramatic fiction intended to entertain the average theatre-goer because it ignores one of the fundamental laws of dramatic construction—the law of proportion. There is too much stress laid on the faith healing in the story. Miracles and conventional screen material must bow alike to the same rule. The constant insistence upon the theme makes for weakness and not for strength.

"'The Miracle Man' succeeded because there was so little of the miracle business in it and so much capital entertainment that had to do with the ordinary affairs of life. Dramatic fiction is no respector of any man's works. No matter the theme, it must conform to the drama's law of proportion. 'The Faith Healer' is not good art according to this law. Even miracles must respect the voice of showmanship."—*Moving Picture World.*

Since the production of "The Miracle Man" a great many photoplaywrights, impelled to write by a sincere idealistic purpose, have submitted plays that have dealt with faith healing, psychic research and similar subjects. But in almost every case these stories have been subject to the same criticism made of "The Faith Healer." That is to say, they have been preachments rather than drama. But above all the screen needs human, convincing drama, dealing with the emotions of common humanity in such a way as to make a universal appeal to the wide screen audience. The laws of dramatic structure must be followed regardless of the theme and subject matter of a play. And the first law of photoplay structure is that a photoplay must be dramatic entertainment.

The vogue for spiritual, psychic and faith healing plays has waned. There is no longer much demand for such stories, unless in addition they are powerful *human* dramas.

A Recipe for a Photoplay

By BERTHA FRANCIS EMERY

TAKE a cup brim full of action,
Then to make the interest tense,
To your cup brim full of action
Add another of suspense.
Take two-thirds a cup of laughter
And one-third a cup of tears—
That's about the right proportion
I have learned throughout the years.
Add one first, the other after
As you stir the mixture fast,
But reserve a little laughter
For about the very last.
Then remember this, I tell you,
It's the mixture's very soul—
The saving salt of naturalness
Must permeate the whole.

The Reason Why

(Continued from Page 16)

interested as I am in the mental growth of all young folks, I am convinced that their entire usefulness depends on a wholesome outlook on the world. I can see where, beyond a doubt, the vivid pictures of vice are doing some harm. It is unfortunately true that the minds of youth are more impressed by photographs than moral lessons. But after careful weighing of the subject I am satisfied that the educational side overbalances the harm.

I thought to safeguard my own interests by a careful choosing of plays but found to my embarrassment at times that this was impracticable—titles are misleading, reviews inadequate. I have decided to clamber down on the side of the Movies and wait to see what they are going to do about it.

And meanwhile, I thought to ask myself, why should we consider only the young people in the matter, regardless of everybody else who enjoys the screen play?

If grown-ups are being harmed, they are old enough to know better; let them stay at home. Certainly, as a whole, our homes are made brighter—family ties drawn closer—differences in age wiped away through this common interest. Mother and Dad are tolerant because they are constantly being brought to face with their own romance and childhood.

But after all, it is the grandmothers whom I love best to see at the movies. Dear souls, condemned to sit in the chimney corner but for these magic hours, when they can go back in fancy to their girlhood, forgetting the long lonely years when, tied down by babies and cares, they all but forgot that they were ever young and occupied the middle of the floor. Little pressed rose grandmothers; stately, well-groomed ones; dumpy, withered apple varieties; queer foreign grandmothers who jabber in some strange tongue to the shock-headed American grandchildren—a little wickedness cannot hurt such as these. It only serves to stir the sluggish blood to flow a little longer. So don't condemn, say I, but do let us try to help, and put forth our best efforts to make the plays so helpful, good and true that they will not need censoring.

To soothe the ache each year—to get out of doors and watch the great spring drama unfold—it is my habit to get out Emerson's "Nature Addresses," and read:

"The good scholar will not refuse to bear the yoke in his youth. . . . Let him pay his tithe and serve the world as a true and noble man The man of genius" (Kings X—I have ceased to aspire to this. If I be but allowed to serve in this great cause, I shall be well content.) "should occupy the whole space between God or pure mind and the multitude of uneducated men. He must draw from the infinite Reason, on one side; and he must penetrate into the heart and sense of the crowd, on the other.

"From one he must draw his strength; and to the other he must owe his aim. At one pole is Reason; at the other Common Sense. If he be defective at either extreme of the scale, his philosophy will seem low and utilitarian. . . . Let him open his breast to all honest inquiry, and be an artist superior to tricks of art. . . . And out of this superior frankness and charity you will learn higher secrets of your nature, which gods will bend and aid you to communicate."

Also this great teacher says that every object in nature represents some thought of man.

Do let us then, if we can't create orchids, at least grow the good fruits and maize, not noxious weeds. Think more of what we put in—less of what we expect to get out.

Quid Rides

(Continued from Page 9)

caught a button-fish that very morning at Catalina. Joe Van Meter says that genius is a infinite capacity for taking pains—but I think that it is a case of give and take at that. I found out afterwards that this was just his way of teaching us about suspense and surprise.

The element of suspense is where you don't know what is coming off, or when, and so it is called suspense, and the ele-

ment of surprise is where something comes off that you didn't know was going to come off, but surprises you—like when Julius Star was surprised that the Australian visiters to his studio could speak English so good, after being in this country only three weeks.

When Mr. Chaplin first told me he would learn me the business, and pay me good jack besides, I thought he couldn't have no sense of humor, but I soon found that he had a keen sense of humor about everything in the world except 2 subjects. One of these was the opposite sect; and I have promised myself that I wasn't going to mention the other, but we all know good and well that we couldn't buy no booze without it, especially in these days, when everything is as dry as the dessert of Sarah. Anyway as it turned out I was glad I listened to the little genius as I sometimes call Mr. Chaplin, for I learned enough in the very first year we were at work on "The Kid" so that if anyone would try to tell me anything I would say they needn't do it as I knew it already.

THERE was 2 other scholars in my class —Albert Austin was the oldest boy, and Chuck Reisener had been there one previous term. Albert used to hays me a little, and one time he got me to go over to the Sennett studio to borrow their comedy angle, and from there they sent me to Rosco Arbuckle's, and so on. This is another point for photo-dramatists. This here comedy angle is an imaginary thing like the Equator, and don't let nobody tell you different. Like when Joe Van Meter was told to get some little prop. cannons and wagons for some performing fleas that the boss was going to use in a seen. Of course you couldn't see the fleas in the pitcher, but the boss pretended like he was making them do their tricks, and you couldn't tell they wasn't there. When the time come for the seen, Joe was ast where was the props? "There in here," he says, showing us an empty box. "We can't see them," we says. "Neither can you see the fleas," says Joe, "their invisible and these here are invisible props."

People on the lot called Albert and Chuck and me the Triangle. They said it was made up of two acute angles, and one obtuse angle. I often wondered which was the obtuse angle. and I guess the others did too. Our chief study was the dicktionary to learn how many different ways there was to say "Yes" to the teacher. Negatives was not allowed except the kind they made in the cameras, and there was two of them—because 2 negatives make an affirmative. The boss could say "No" and was heard to do so frequently. When the boss was trying to think on the set nobody was allowed to say nothing. The only sounds you could hear was Al. Kitchen trying to drive nails on the q. t. in a far off corner of the lot, and the occasional dropping of an H in the front office. Them was the happy days. I would have been there yet, if I could have staved off my nervous breakdown. The trouble was my brain was developed beyond my strength.

Well, this piece is getting pretty long, and I will close with just a few hints gleaned from the methods that has brought Mr. Chaplin his great success. For one thing he believes as Chuck Reisener so often says, that brevity is the soul of wit—some of his best seens are just quick flashes of two feet. He has a knack that it would pay anybody to study, and to copy, of convulsing the spectators every once in a while, or oftener, with a screamingly funny peace of business. I understand that Billy West is now doing the same thing.

A good thing for all of us photo-dramatists to remember is that if your comedy action is dragging anywheres you can often help it by putting a side-splitting gag in the weakest place. There are men called gag men because they furnish the gags, shoot craps, and clown around the lot, waiting for the boss to come out. If you are a gag man, you must fit your gag to your star. A gag might be A 1 at Lloyd's and not be Chaplinesque, whereas if you were aiming it at "A Small Town Idle" it would have to be more Turpintine—if you know what I mean? A good way to learn how to do this is to go to a good master, and the very best way of all is to do like I done, and sit at Charlie Chaplin's feet—for then you are right next to the best brains in the comedy business.

Will the secretaries of all Palmer Clubs kindly send a complete list of their officers and information regarding when and where their meetings are held, etc., to Elizabeth Bingham, Associate Editor of THE PHOTODRAMATIST, 124 West 4th Street, Los Angeles, California.

What Was Clytemnestra, Etc.

(Continued from Page 5)

thistles and patches of barren ground, bogs and swamps.

The strangest thing about professional or amateur criticism is the eternal idiocy of going forth into some realm of art and carefully selecting the dried mullen stalks, the skunk cabbages, the dead toads and the brambles to bring home as proof that spring is a lie. The typical critic comes home strutting and pluming himself on his superiority to the children and the common people who went out into the same wilderness and brought back wild roses, delicate mosses, stories of birds seen and heard and of life wakening in the earth, the grass, the tree, and even in the newly rejoicing air.

It is silly to abuse the moving pictures because it appeals to the masses, for that is the most glorious office of every art, and the greatest art properly presented will thrill the greatest number.

And then, of course, one very worthy phase of the moving picture is industrial and educational rather than artistic in ambition. We must have oatmeal and bread and water as well as peacock's tongues, truffles and spiced wine.

In the course of its development the moving picture will undoubtedly specialize for special audiences. There will be theaters where people who seek only a certain school of art will find it; where those who like a certain kind of thing will find what they like. That time has come in the theater in verse and fiction. But at first the drama was for the whole populace, the epics were sung to the throngs, and the novels were written for the multitude.

Let those Pharisee critics who smite their chests and thank the Lord that they are not of common clay take what delight they may in their self-deception. But their day of reckoning is not far off. Perhaps they will wake with a sudden remorse to the fact that another great art has been added to the human estate and has grown to its maturity with never a kind or helpful word from them, and no recognition of any sort except a futile rain of accusations, false witness, and Lilliputian ridicule.

The chariot wheels of every art are red with the blood of these critics who turn a gracious progress into a juggernautical horhor by hurling themselves under the wheels not meant for slaughter, but for speed.

In spite of all, the movies move. Some of them are disgusting, some of them vicious, some of them trite in whole or in spots. But this can be said of every other field of art. Meanwhile there have been and are achievements in which greatness appears in moments more or less numerous. And that is as much as can be said of any other field of art.

The most encouraging sign is the recent flocking of the world's greatest writers to this new opportunity. It is an American invention, and like our skyscraper, once reviled, is now accepted as one of the mightiest contributions of any era to the human race. New York Times.

Film Fetters and Fetishes

(Continued from Page 13)

how the screen might interpret the delicately tinted fantasies of a photodramatist whose skill parallelled Lafcadio Hearn's! What a triumph would be recorded for the photoplaywright who could translate into terms of sequential pictures an allegory the equal of Mark Twain's "The Mysterious Stranger!" We directors would have to evolve in leaps and bounds to be equal to the task of filming such stories.

In the interests of art, I hope the day will soon come when all photoplays will not be written for the comprehension of "the average man," Sunday school teachers, or children. There should soon be a broad field for a Hans Christian Anderson or a Horatio Alger or an L. Frank Baum, to provide good, entertaining stuff for the "kiddies" only. There will always be a broader field for works of mediocrity, for the edification of the average audience. But there will be Shakespeares, Shelleys and Edwin Arnolds of the cinema, too—let us hope.

If a few photodramatists will depart from the gushy guff of the best sellers; if a few will prefer a high art expression to immediate checks from potboilers; and if more will believe in the infinite possibilities of the screen—shaking off fetters and discarding fetishes, America's own art will become the mightiest power for human development ever devised by human heart and brain.

Questions Answered

(The Editor of this department invites any questions concerning photoplay writing in general. This is your page. It is hoped that the Questions and Answers will help all students and will bring a closer community of interest into your work. Questions that arise in discussions in Palmer Clubs will receive special attention. Please remember that questions relating to specific stories should be addressed to the Advisory Bureau and should preferably accompany the story in question.)

Q.—I have created what seems to me to be a wonderful character. Any star who can act should be eager to portray her. But how about the plot? I can't seem to get a plot to fit.—A. J. S.

A.—Don't work at it. Don't fret. Stick to your character. Write down everything you know about her, about her past, her home life, her family, etc. Know her thoroughly. Then try to act as she would act. Play her part yourself. Discuss her with some friend. Think of a character she might meet, some one in contrast. Develop three or four such characters and group them around your lead. Then watch the plot grow. Let your imagination move freely. Live your story with your characters and the plot will take care of itself. All good plots result directly from the interplay of characters, from what the characters *do* and from what others do in opposition.

Q.—Is it wise to write a story for a definite star? I have read dissenting opinions on this subject.—H. I.

A.—Generally it is not wise to write for *one* definite star, unless you are positive your story fits that star. It is wise to write for a group of stars, and to think, as you write your story, of the stars who might play it. Is it a comedy drama with a young man lead? Is it a comedy drama for a young woman? Or a drama for a mature emotional actress? Determine what kind of a story you are writing and which character is the lead and then think of all the stars who might portray that part. Then you can estimate its chances in the market.

Q.—The more I study the less imaginative I seem to get. I used to be full of great ideas, or so they seemed. Now I stop and dissect them, analyze them, and there's nothing left. Have you some magic potion to relieve this condition? You seem to have covered everything else in your Course.—W. E. T.

A.—You have the magic yourself, and a suggestion may show you how to use it. This is the suggestion: If you think you know the rules, start a story and forget the rules. Think only of your characters, live with them, play with them, enjoy your writing, allow yourself to be moved by its drama, laugh at its comedy. Concentrate so entirely on the story as a story that you have no time for dissection. Get some fun out of your work and you will give pleasure to those who read it. Make the rules subconscious, and don't think about them until after your story is finished. Then you can dissect and analyze coldly and calmly. While you are writing, consider your story the very best that ever was, and enjoy it to the full. Dickens wept when he wrote the death of Nell; Mark Twain laughed uproariously at his own stories while he wrote. The more enjoyment—dramatic or amusing—you get out of your work, the better it will be.

Q.—If a writer wants to meet the market requirements, what type of story should he write?—F. B. B.

A.—There are two kinds that are always in demand, that always sell quickly if they are good enough. Swift moving, clever, romantic comedy drama, with either man or girl lead; and strong, emotional, serious dramas for more mature actors and actresses. There is also a fine demand at present for big feature stories, for all-star casts, based upon real themes and with unusual opportunities for great productions. It is perhaps wise to alternate, if one can, between comedy drama and serious drama. Don't say you can't write comedy, or drama, until you've tried. Find yourself and your kind of work by practice.

Q.—Are letters, written to a certain department of a newspaper, public property and may they be used in photoplays? Just what is a sex or a problem play—the kind that is so generally decried?—Mrs. T. M. B.

A.—Letters written to a newspaper and published may be used as suggestions for a photoplay, but they should not be used as they appear in the paper. They should be changed and remodelled to fit the story. Fiction published in newspapers must not be used.

Sex or problem stories are those in which the subject of sex and sex relationships are treated in too realistic or too unpleasant a way. Sex is of course one of the great motives of drama, but it should not be dealt with by the photodramatist in a suggestive, unwholesome or unclean way, as has been the case in the productions of a few misguided producers. Such scenes in pictures are invariably censored and indeed give rise to the censorship agitation.

Q.—I have heard that some photoplaywrights are selling their work on a royalty basis, getting a percentage of the profits. Is it possible to sell stories in this way?—Philip W.

A.—Not at present. The time is coming when photoplays will be sold in this way, but only a few very well-known writers can demand such terms at present. The prices paid for stories, however, are high enough to make it the best-paid literary work.

Q.—Is there any demand for mystery or detective stories as photoplays?—Mrs. P. V. W.

A.—Relatively little, because they have been found ineffective, in general, on the screen. Such stories usually depend for their interest upon an artificial kind of suspense that involves keeping a secret from the audience. Such suspense cannot be maintained in a five-reel play unless the story has some stronger and more convincing foundation.

Facing the Future

(Continued from Page 14)

courage of your convictions you will never let go. You will welcome whatever criticisms are made of your efforts and sit down immediately to do the best you can to make your play a great deal better.

We could tell you how Knoblock kept his play "Kismet" going to different managers continually for two solid years before it was finally accepted. We could tell you how Rodin, the famous French sculptor who modeled "The Thinker," nearly starved before he sold one of his statues. We can recite hundreds of such examples but you are not interested in what *they did,* as in what *you can do.*

My earnest advice to every man and woman who sincerely wants to write photoplays is to STICK TO IT. Write—study—and then write some more.

You have heard the old platitude: "There is no royal road to success." Well, it's true. Who ever heard of a doctor, lawyer, author, artist, architect, engineer or any professional man who made a success in a month or two?

Look up the biography of any successful man or woman and you will find he or she went through long periods of rigid training before reaching the top. And then the chances are there was more studying done.

You have to do the same thing in photoplaywriting although the training isn't as technical or as long. You can master it in a comparatively short time. But this idea of skipping over the books once and then expecting to sit right down and turn out a masterpiece is all wrong. It may have been done but I have never heard of it.

The Handbook and Enclopedia contain every fundamental principle connected with screen writing.

It is all in those two books. Your success as a photodramatist depends entirely upon the time you give to the study of them.

You can do it. You can write successfull photoplays if you study systematically and keep on writing no matter how many stories are rejected. Eventually you'll land one, and then another and still another.

How many stories do you think Jack London wrote before one was accepted? Over one hundred; he made up his mind to become a writer and he did.

As I said before, the future development of the screen rests with the writers of original screen stories. It is they who will lift it out of any rut into which it may fall.

And this is all the more reason I am asking the screen authors with unusual and revolutionary ideas to have courage and patience. New ideas, new inventions and new methods have always been looked upon askance, but sooner or later they invariably come into their own just as your stories will be recognized eventually if you *keep at it.*

If I had the power, I would arrange all the stars in the heavens into one huge sign. It would read "KEEP AT IT"!

Savings Bank ads read, "Save for the future." That not only applies to money but to study. The more knowledge you store up, the more you have to use and the more you use it the more you will have. Think it over. Every Palmer student is facing a profitable and wonderful future for the mechanical problems of yesterday are solved and story problems of the future stare at us questioningly. A new era in screen history is about to begin under those who "carry on," biting a contemptuous thumb at the rejection slip.

Individualize Your Characters

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qualities he may possess. It depends entirely upon the character of a man as to what action he will take under certain conditions.

For instance: A man is on a boat. A beautiful young lady falls overboard. What action he will take depends upon his character. He may rescue her in the hope of a reward. He may be too cowardly to do anything but call for help. He may instinctively leap after her with no thought but to save a life.

Do you see the point? A man's actions do not govern his character—his character governs his actions.

You must know the characters in your

story as you never knew any one in life. They must be real to you or they can never be convincing on the screen. You must know their histories from birth. Where did they come from? How much education did they have? What kind of people did they associate with? What is their religion or philosophy?

In other words, to create individuals you must create their entire history and personalities. Make them so alive that you would know them anywhere.

Visualize their physical beings. What do they look like? How do they walk? How do they use their hands? Once these characteristics are firmly established in your mind you will instinctively know what their reactions will be in a given situation.

Another example: A character is ordering someone out of the room. It depends upon his personality as to his method. He may shout an order, whisper a command or merely wave a hand.

Do you remember the "Emma McChesney" stories by Edna Ferber? Remember Jock, Emma's son? Miss Ferber was once discussing her stories while she was writing the series and said:

"I don't know what to do with Jock. He's getting very wayward. I'll have to find some way to pull him up."

That character was a real, live person to her. He and his mother were her mental companions, and she was able to write about them as if they were part of her family.

R. L. Stevenson mentions the fact that he would not have been surprised had any one of his characters opened his door and walked into the room, so real were they to him. He knew every one of them, inside and out.

MAKE each one of your characters a distinctive individual—not a type. In other words, if your hero is a clerk, make him an unusual clerk—an unusually good one or an unusually bad one, it doesn't matter just so long as he stands out from the mob as a personality.

There have been thousands of John Smiths in the world, but only one Abraham Lincoln. John Smith represents the type; colorless, smug and uninteresting. Abraham Lincoln represents the individual, strong, virile and full of the stuff that heroes are made of. I don't mean that your hero must be a superman with the face and figure of Apollo, but he must be an individual, lovable and human.

Every student of screen stories should read some elementary book on psychology. Study human beings from every angle. They are the basis for your story.

Spinoza lists forty-eight emotions as follows:

Desire	Self-complacency
Pleasure	Humility
Pain	Repentance
Wonder	Pride
Contempt	Dejection
Love	Glory
Hatred	Shame
Inclination	Regret
Aversion	Emulation
Devotion	Gratitude
Derision	Benevolence
Hope	Anger
Fear	Vengeance
Confidence	Cruelty
Despair	Timidity
Joy	Daring
Disappointment	Cowardice
Pity	Consternation
Favor	Modesty
Indignation	Ambition
Partiality	Luxury
Disparagement	Drunkenness
Envy	Avarice
Compassion	Lust

WHAT your characters are and were before you put them into your story is indicated by their reactions toward these emotions. And from seeing these reactions the audience reads their thoughts.

One could call this list a "key to character." It stands in the same relation to your personalities as the thirty-six dramatic situations does to your plot and are therefore worthy of study.

Producers are continually asking for simple stories of every day life with strong clean-cut characters. They want something to put in the frame of the "magic mirror" which will approximate the public's ideal.

Create an individual who has a universal appeal and you will have a popular story, no matter how simple your plot or theme may be. Create a lovable personality with whom we can sympathize and then let him (or her) win out, just as we would like to do if we were in his place.

Why do we like to see the "Cinderella" story in its many disguises? Simply because we all like to believe that some day we will have everything we want without any exertion on our part. If we can't, it's only natural that we enjoy seeing someone else getting it, providing that someone is worthy. And that's where characterization comes in.

Study the various productions and you'll find that the ones you like best are the ones in which an unusually strong and human personality predominates.

Katherine Hilliker—Film Doctor

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with the scenics and the comedies brought her in turn to the attention of the feature film producers; and so it was that she fixed up Annette Kellerman's special, "What Women Love" and the Screen Classic Production, "Held in Trust." Here is a revealing portrait from the former:

"Annabel started out in life as the daughter of James King Cotton; but by the time she was a two-year-old, Cotton was known as the father of Annabel, and he has been humping for place ever since."

Here is a gem from "Held in Trust," describing the desperation and tiredness of the heroine:

"Mary's morning was pretty snappy and her afternoon fair; but from four o'clock on she began to grow groggy and from five-thirty to six she could not have sold an angleworm to a hungry fish."

The most recently screened example of her work is "Passion"—refused by practically every large distributor in the United States for months because they could not see the kernel of picture behind all the footage of pageantry. It was finally accepted by First National, whose officials had had previous experience with Katharine Hilliker's work and who, therefore, insisted that she title this production. From the very first introductory title to the last scene on the screen, Mrs. Hilliker preserved not only the period of the story but kept the audience enthralled with the drama of its action, the gorgeousness of its pageantry and the epic quality of the entire spectacle. And there is no doubt that the phenomenal success which has been won by this first foreign-made picture to arrive here for about five years—has opened the door to other European productions which may be worthy of screening in our theatres.

Immediately after "Passion" came "Out of the Chorus," Alice Brady's latest Realart vehicle, in which she and Edith Stockton play the roles of two chorus girl pals, and whose story reveals most intimately the off-stage life of the girls of the theatre.

It is not trick versatility that permits Katharine Hilliker to range from epic tragedy to the lightest form of short comedy—through the intervening stages of comedy-drama, farce and scenics—it is her own innate humanness and her understanding of human beings. The audiences for whom readers of The Photodramatist are weaving their stories are not terrible ogres who wait to devour the poor author; they are all human beings, and to please them you must understand them.

To quote Katharine Hilliker herself: "Man and woman, boy and girl, who come to the motion picture theatre, come there to get away from the humdrum banalities and pettinesses of our complex daily life. They do not want to be preached to nor talked down to. They are just human beings like the rest of us and it is our job to give them what they crave—wholesome will describe that want—to the very best of our ability and imagination. To do less would be to shirk our chosen job."

What Is Happening to the Motion Picture Industry

(Continued from Page 18)

from the "Exhibitors Herald," settle the one remaining doubt.

"Motion picture securities listed on the New York stock exchange have taken a substantial upward turn. This is a significant development indicating the attitude of the financial and business experts of the country toward the stability and future prosperity of the industry. *The advance in these securities is particularly significant at this time when the general movement in the market is in the other direction.*"

(The italics are the writer's.)

"In various instances financial authorities are evidencing a decided change in front toward the motion picture business. This comes largely as the result of thorough investigation that has been going on for some time. This industry generally has always labored under the handicap of inadequate financing. The production branch is a type of business that requires

elaborate outside financing, yet inaccurate information concerning the methods of the industry have prevented bankers from realizing this and appreciating the merits of producers' requirements."

Now, whatever depression there was four or five months ago has completely disappeared and we find a decided hump in its place.

We wish you could go around to the various studios with us. You would see every plant buzzing with activity. About three months ago Universal had only about six directors working. Today there are twenty-six units manufacturing pictures. Other studios have increased their production practically in proportion.

If all the other industries were as normal, and recovered as quickly from the current slump and had as ready market for their products as the film industry, the financial and business interests of this country would have little to worry about.

What Do They Want?

(Continued from Page 15)

demand. The made-over novels of long ago are beginning to pall. People ask: Are there no settings of today? Why always the Middle Ages? Why no modern atmosphere for modern paintings on the screen as well as in our galleries? Tell us not in mournful numbers, tales from the extinct corner grocery store. Are not wit and philosophy to be found in the meeting halls of the Painters' Co-operative Lodge, Local 42, or the headquarters of the Young Women's "O'Mally for Alderman" League?

Foreign culture of the gloomy variety is not for the Yankee. What has been vulgarly dubbed the "belly-aching school of drama" is not compatible with the American sense of humor. We must and will laugh, and we do not long hold the sort of grouch which made Bobbie Burns write: "How can ye sing, ye little birds, and I sae fu' o' care?" We are strong for the happy promises of little birds and great prophets. Mary Austin, lately returned from a wide survey of culture in the United States, sounds an optimistic note. Having supplied ourselves pretty generally with home-made modern conveniences, she says, we are now about to go in for a modern native culture, not the artificial "cult" of the privileged and jaded few, but the true and beautiful expression of the developing life of a whole people. She predicts that it will be a culture seeded in small communities of 20,000 or less. We believe that she is right. And the leaders in our Movie Play development may well learn from such democrats as Theodore Thomas to give us a little in advance, what we are about to demand for ourselves because of an ever-growing craving for the true, the good and the beautiful.

What to Avoid in a Scenario

(Continued from Page 6)

a general way; the identifying of any creed with objectionable characters or incidents is a thing to be shunned.

By the same token, to show disrespect on the part of a character or characters for religious objects, such as the mutilation of a Bible or crucifix, is assuredly to be avoided.

Comedy sometimes gives rise to the possibility of offending through suggestion even more than drama, and as a result this type of story should be watched and handled with delicacy and due regard for the proprieties.

There is no need to depict bloodshed unnecessarily. Remember that the public as a whole must be considered and no one can say that playgoers actually delight in such scenes. The screen is not a pathological survey, nor should it give scope to the harrowing details of an ensanguined encounter.

Subtitles that are offensive, advertising matter that is objectionable, are alike to be avoided.

It will be seen that there is no unnecessary prudery involved in a consideration of the subjects to be left out of the picture which conforms to the requirements of good taste. The world is full of fine, enobling, inspiring and beautiful things. To make these stand out in their full grandeur, it is necessary at times to depict their reverse, but the normal producer will see to it that decency is observed and that the ill effects of indulgence in any form of vice is clearly shown.

THERE IS no short cut to success. You have to know all the rules of any art before you can break them. But by making them your tools instead of your limitations there is no reason why you can't change every one and do something big. No great creative artist believes only in what has already been done or takes the horizon line for the edge of the world.—E. P. B.

California to Protect Authors Who File Plays

EVER since the beginning of the motion picture industry writers of scenarios have from time to time complained that their ideas have been stolen by studio officials to whom they had submitted their work. The reputable and established producers of pictures would no more think of "cribbing" an original story or even an idea in a submitted synopsis, than they would of knocking a man down and taking his watch, but occasionally "fly-by-night" producing companies spring up and stories submitted to these concerns are lost, misplaced or stolen outright.

Because of this, numerous suits and near-suits have marred the cinema serenity of the West Coast studios because of the charges of piracy. Now authors are to be given some degree of protection, for the bill that has received legislative approval provides that scenarios or stories may be filed with the Secretary of State of California and thereafter used as prima facie evidence in actions wherein theft of plots for motion pictures is charged.

THE measure is Assembly Bill 133, introduced by Assemblyman Baker, who discussed the advisability of presenting the copyright bill with Frederick Palmer a year ago. After Mr. Palmer had looked into the legal points of the case, to determine whether or not it would conflict with any previous federal legislation, it was decided to present "an act to add a new section to the political code to be numbered 3202, relating to copyrights."

The text of the bill:

"The people of the state of California do enact as follows:

"Section 1—A new section is hereby added to the political code to read as follows:

"3202—Any person may file with the Secretary of State a printed or typewritten copy of any lecture, sermon, address, dramatic composition, story or motion picture scenario with an affidavit attached thereto certified to by any officer authorized to take acknowledgments setting forth that such person is the author of the said printed or typewritten matter, and is entitled to all the rights and benefits accruing therefrom.

"Upon receipt of such printed or typewritten matter and the accompanying affidavit, the Secretary of State shall file the same in his office, keeping a record thereof showing the date of filing, name of the claimant, and the title of the lecture or other printed or typewritten matter, and shall at the time of filing, issue to the claimant a certificate of filing under the great seal of the state, which certificate shall set forth the facts so recorded.

"The said certificate of filing of a certified copy thereof shall be admitted in any court as prima facie evidence of the facts recorded.

"A filing fee of two dollars shall be paid to the Secretary of State for each certificate of filing. All fees received therefrom shall be deposited in the state treasury."

It occurred to us, in connection with the above, that it might be a good idea to remind the students of the Palmer Plan that all manuscripts submitted to our sales department—and all other departments for that matter—are afforded protection equal to that of the State. All stories are typed and the originals placed in our files for evidence in case of a dispute. However, in all the years we have been submitting manuscripts to the various studios, we have never yet had any reason to suspect anyone of the theft of an idea or plot.—The Editor.

Sees Future for Authors

By Johnston McCulley

Author of "The Mark of Zorro" (Fairbanks). Distinguished Novelist and Short Story Writer.

SUCCESSFUL pieces of fiction and plays always will be translated to the screen. But we must remember that all the successful works of yesterday have been used, and the output of successful fiction and drama is but a small percentage of the material demanded by producer. It follows, then, that the bulk of screen material must come from members of the new profession, the photoplaywrights.

As we fictionists know, there are thousands of persons who can evolve clever plots but couldn't write them into acceptable fiction form in a million years. We hire some of them now and then as idea men. But this class, with the proper technical training, can make successful photoplaywriters and there will be, in the near future, no limit to the success which such may attain.

Proper technical training is essential. Some of our foremost authors now are getting it first-hand at the studios; authors whose incomes run into six figures. In the past there have been many so-called schools

purporting to teach short story writing, writing for the screen, etcetera, and the most of them have been useless. But I take off my hat to the department of education of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation.

The Motion Picture as a Fine Art

Speaking before the California State Art Conference, held recently at the University of California, Rob Wagner, well-known artist and scenario writer, described the development of the eighth fine art. When asked for information regarding the art of photoplay writing, Mr. Wagner said: "I have investigated practically every school that pretends to teach photoplay writing, but I can recommend only one—the Palmer Photoplay Corporation of Los Angeles. If you have it in you, the Palmer Plan will bring it out. It is really a university of the screen."

Mr. Wagner went on to tell of the experience of one of his friends, a famous educator and president of a university, who took the Palmer Plan under an assumed name, with much misgiving, and asserted after completing his course that it was a splendid education. This student is now holding a high-salaried position on the staff of one of the large motion picture companies.

The opinion of such educators shows clearly that the Palmer Plan is really of university calibre in every branch.

Inspiration No Respecter of Persons

By Horace B. Newton

INSPIRATION is democratic. No matter whether you ever wrote a story before or not, you are just as liable to meet with the material for a big story as a little one, provided only you are able to recognize it. The skill is in judging materials, and making a finished product in proportion.

Steamships and launches are built in the same yard, and the builder is proud of both, because both are finished products, with corresponding precision of detail. Don't yield to the temptation, as so many writers have, of trying to make a liner out of materials that were meant for a ferryboat. Build a good ferryboat, so you can always be proud of it afterward.

MANUSCRIPTS TYPED

Typing and revising manuscripts for Palmer students a specialty. Write for information. EMILY F. SMITH, 600 Markwell Bldg., Long Beach, Calif.

Palmer Elected to Important Office

AT the general election of the Affiliated Picture Interests, Inc., held on the evening of April 8th, Frederick Palmer was elected to the permanent board of directors for the year 1921.

The Affiliated Picture Interests include the entire membership of the Motion Picture Directors Association, The Screen Writers Guild of the Author's League of America, the Cinematographers Association, The Motion Picture Producers Association, The Assistant Directors Association, The California Exhibitors Association, The Motion Picture Actors Association, and, in fact, every organization of motion picture people in California as well as all those who are interested in the future of the screen that are not members of specific associations.

Bookman for May

THE May issue of "The Bookman" will be devoted almost entirely to articles analyzing the screen. We have received advance proofs of Ben B. Hampton's article "The Author and the Movies." Mr. Hampton does not deal exclusively with the scenario end of the screen, but gives many interesting and instructive details about the producer's end of it as well. He feels that the next two years will show wonderful changes and that the main limitation in the past has been the lack of expert photodramatics.

"The movies have grown so rapidly that the demand for skillful photodramatists far exceed the supply." We quote this because it cannot be said too often to you. Always keep it in mind. Mr. Hampton was one of the first men to put the work of famous authors on the screen, but he does not feel this is the solution of the scenario problem by any means. "The appeal of the motion picture is to all classes from the lowest to the highest." The strata containing the book readers is small "and below them there is an enormous audience with little or no knowledge of famous authors."

This enormous audience belongs to the photodramatist.

The Photoplay Market

With the increasing production of motion pictures comes an increasing demand for original stories. Producers are seeking material from every source with the hope of finding suitable screen stories.

Now is the time for photodramatists to not only get busy, but to stay busy. If stories are returned it isn't because the market is flooded—it is because the submissions are not suitable.

Every editor we've talked to the past few weeks has emphatically expressed his desire for filmable photoplays.

What producers want are sane, clean, simple stories about sane, clean, every-day human beings. It doesn't make much difference whether the stories are comedy or drama, as long as they are vital and human.

Once you get the hang of keeping your theme big, your plot simple and your characters human, you won't have much difficulty in disposing of your efforts.

Below are listed some of the immediate needs of various studios:

GOLDWYN

Strong, virile, dramatic stories; social atmosphere with sane, big thought or theme. Vigorous, outdoor elemental drama. Breezy and romantic stories for Tom Moore, having a very likeable chap for the leading character.

WILLIAM FOX VAUDEVILLE COMPANY (West Coast Studios)

Mr. Jack Strumwasser, the scenario editor at the Fox studios tells us that he will consider:

"Any part that requires good dramatic acting of the John Barrymore type is suitable for Jack Gilbert.

"Johnny Walker is in his element in light drama and quick snappy action.

"Shirley Mason has attained popularity in sympathetic wistful parts, which may develop into real dramatic action as the story goes on.

"Eileen Percy is being cast in light comedies or farce comedies, society or small towns.

"For Tom Mix and Buck Jones, we consider all western stories that embody thrills, stunts, heart interest, love interest and comedy. A combination of these are essential.

"William Russell is at his best in any big, virile dramatic story where brute strength or a powerful personality is necessary to the theme. The locale may be western or eastern."

FAMOUS PLAYERS-LASKY CORPORATION

"Famous Players-Lasky Corporation considers stories from all outside authors regardless of their reputation. There are no restrictions as to the character of the stories excepting that they must be big enough for at least five-reel pictures. It would hardly be necessary to state that we could buy only such stories as would appeal to us as being of exceptional quality."

LOIS WEBER PRODUCTIONS

The following announcement is from the Lois Weber Studios:

"Unusual stories, especially those built around worth while themes, will be purchased at liberal figures. Miss Weber wishes stories with a theme. Stories must be of such a type that if it were necessary they could be shown in any church in the country. Send all manuscripts to Lois Weber Productions, Santa Monica Boulevard and Vermont Avenue, Hollywood, California."

CHRISTIE FILM COMPANY

"We are in the market for one and two-reel comedies, stories written around young lovers or newlyweds and containing snappy and humorous incidents of every day life. The comedy should be kept between two or three principals, and the story, if possible, should be played all at the same time—or having not more than one time lapse in a single reel, and perhaps two or three in a two-reel picture. Stories should not be put into continuity. Use only the typewritten synopsis form."

KING VIDOR PRODUCTIONS

"I prefer stories dealing with modern American life.

"Am particularly strong for the story that is intimate, dealing with the people who might live next door or around the corner.

"Stories dealing with the first years of marriage, the romances of young business women, any domestic problem, or capital and labor, are acceptable to me.

"Prefer super-production material, for a big, vital seven or eight reel photoplay.

"Write 'em for me as human as you can make 'em, with the kind of drama that takes place within, rather than without.

"I don't want pictures to star someone in. I want stories, that's all; I'll find the players to fit the parts. The story's the thing.

"Send 'em to yours truly, at Vidor Village, Hollywood, Calif."

In view of the fact that so many abrupt and radical changes are taking place in the studios, we do not feel justified in attempting a complete list of the needs of the various companies. However, we have obtained authoritative statements from several which we pass along for your benefit.

ARE YOU TRYING TO

Write a Play?

Read the

DRAMATIST

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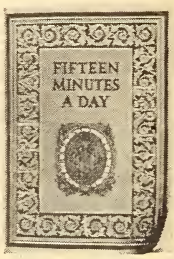
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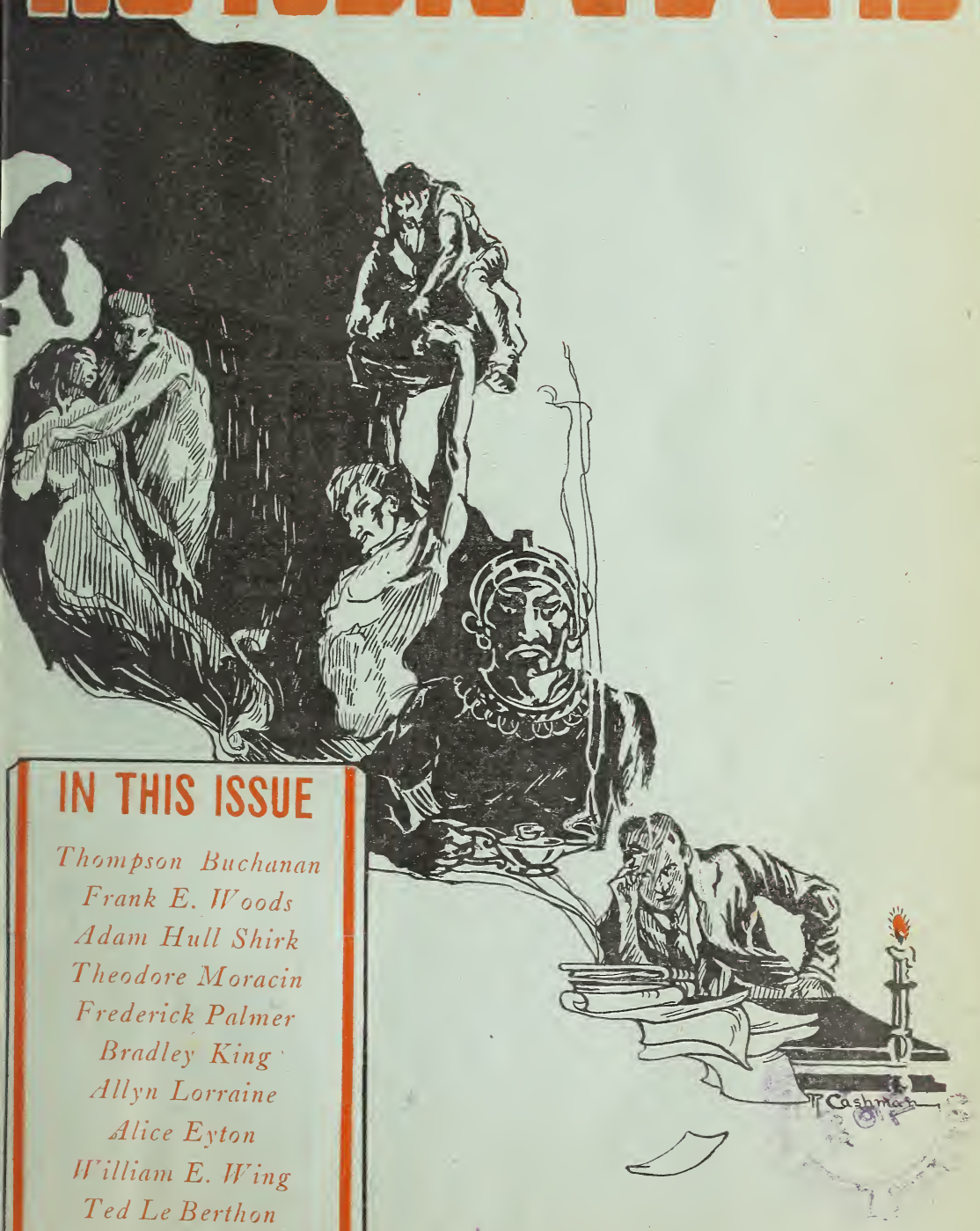
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THE PHOTODRAMATIST



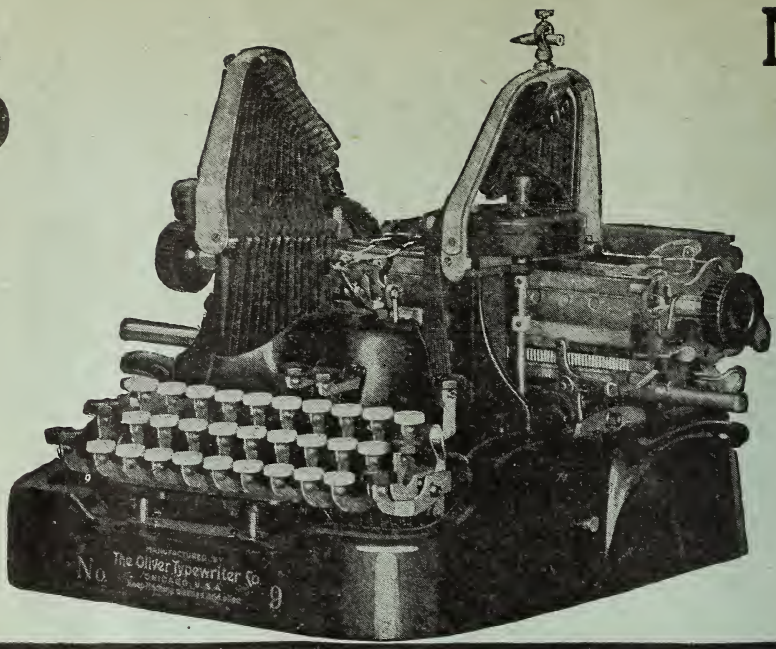
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THE JULY PHOTODRAMATIST

Articles by Lois Weber, Rex Ingram, Bryan Irvine, Walter Woods, Adolph Bennauer, Vera Gordon, David Bader Frederick Bennett, Mary Thurman, Kate Corbaley and others

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The PHOTODRAMATIST



Expression

By Frederick Palmer



THOUGH you amass the wealth of Croesus; though you acquire power, and all the catalogued and classified knowledge in the visible universe; though the world slaps you on the back and shouts "Success!"—Life has mocked you, and you know it down deep in your heart, if you've failed to express your real self.

The folks at home, and perhaps a score of so-called practical, dry-as-dust acquaintances, seriously warn you against the inevitable poorhouse or emit a sickening, patronizing smile—when you mention your determination to write.

Life is a question of values. Those who are not sensitive to beauty—who neither feel exalted nor inwardly disturbed in some mysterious manner by a picture, a poem, a strain of music—measure success in terms of pieces of metal. Despite their precautions, despite their clinging pathetically to conventional and ephemeral guideposts, they often terminate Life's brief span with but few of these same pieces of metal, grudgingly wrested from the blighting mills of commerce.

The so-called practically minded always lack perspective; always confound their ounce of brass filings for a ton of gold dust; always lack a true, high-grade sense of humor. They cannot envision the terrible fact that this planet is probably millions of years old; that millions of people are being born or are dying every day, and that this process will continue for millions of years more; that every night myriad human automatons sleep, rising with the morning sun like innumerable nails beneath a magnet.

Our practical friends do not realize that their fears make them automatons from the cradle to the grave, their gold-dust filmed eyes rendering them blind to beauty—nor do they visualize their stores and factories and all their business enterprises passing as swiftly as flashes of lightning, in the presence of Eternity!

The writer of photoplays may create a drama that will bring light and laughter and love to grown-ups and children in all parts of the world, in populous cities and at the very outposts of civilization.

Many photodramatists are financially better off than scores of bankers and merchants, without having their lives warped into any inert mould. And the photodramatist must be, to attain success, a humanitarian, a poet of the people. His is the universal attitude, not the local, hemmed-in viewpoint of the "practical." And best of all, having long since junked the gods of commerce, he is more apt to preserve his sense of humor.



Royalties for Photodramatists

By Percy Marmont

IT is not in the nature of any presumption on my part, as a lowly actor of motion pictures, to tell scenario writers what to do or to tell producers how to select their scenarios and how to treat them after selection. I do feel, however, happy to accept the invitation offered me by the Editor of "The Photodramatist" to express a couple of thoughts on these subjects, since I have been thinking along these lines during the three years or more that I have been connected with the screen in this country.

Originally an actor on the British speaking stage, I had considerable experience on the other side in plays of every conceivable nature, and therefore feel that this rich experience helps to give me some authority on that score. Since coming to the States I have appeared in a number of stage plays and a great number of motion picture productions. It has been my good fortune to play opposite almost every one of the notable female screen stars in the East, and also to appear in several of the all-star productions which have marked the latest trend in the films.

So much for introduction!

The first conviction that I have had during my time in the pictures—a conviction which I know is shared by very many others interested in various other angles of the industry, and which has grown upon me personally for a couple of years—is that the chief hope for improvement in the art of the screen lies in the encouragement given to authors of original stories for it. The mechanical genius of the American motion picture director, camera man, electrician and other experts in the production field has brought American-made pictures to the very forefront. Lately, also, there has been a concerted movement to bring to the films not only books and plays of established reputation, but their authors; so that these authors might learn some of the requirements, possibilities and limitations of the camera, and write directly for the screen. To my mind, however, the chief hope for better stories lies in the writers of original scenarios and plots for the camera. Today, this is being widely recognized, and we have individual instances where the authors of original stories or scenarios are paid quite liberally for their product. But these payments are all in a lump sum.

My suggestion is to make these payments on the royalty basis, along similar lines to the practice which is common with stage playwrights. There is a direct incentive to the author to do his very best on every individual play. He—or she—receives a certain percentage of the profits, which percentage grows greater as the profits exceed a certain stated sum; to begin with, the author is given an advance on his royalties. In this way every play which is turned out is the very best within that author's power. It has been written and rewritten, groomed and polished, and has attained as close a proximity to perfection as that author can evolve. Where, however, as in the screen world, the author receives a stated sum, even if it be a large one, for his scenario, there is the great temptation to relax after having achieved success, and to skimp on the arduous work of revision, before selling the manuscript. I would not accuse any individual scenario writer of this negligence; and I have met so many of them in person that I know none of them would commit it intentionally or "with malice or forethought." But every one of us knows of numerous instances of such carelessness —if you want to call it that. Give the scenario writer a certain percentage of the gross receipts of the film which is based on his story; then you will find that, instead of trying to see how many stories he can write and sell, he will see how good is each story he finishes. Then, if the picture grosses a large amount of money, he has a commensurate return for his increased effort.

The Fundamental Thing

By Alice Eyton

WHAT is it that makes a picture "get over"? That is the question which we, as scenario writers, have constantly to keep before our minds, and our pictures are successful in proportion as we answer it correctly.

To plunge right to the heart of the matter, the thing a picture *must* have is human interest; the little human touches which everybody recognizes as having seen in some friend or acquaintance and which, because of that association, evoke a smile or a sigh.

The best way to get this familiarity is by observation, by actual contact on a common footing, with people of all classes and conditions. So I will tell a little of my early experiences, which, I was later to find, were going to prove invaluable in my motion-picture work.

My first professional experience in writing was on the Sunday Times of Sydney, Australia, for which paper I did general reporting as well as "features." I have the inquiring turn of mind, and nothing would do but I must go, *incognito* of course, to the Salvation Army and municipal night refuge, where the unfortunates and misfits of Sydney nightly drifted for their four-penny bed. I was very thin—as well as quite young—at the time, so I dressed in a long, shabby gown and a flappy, bedraggled hat, and paid my four-pence with the rest.

My disguise must have been complete, for I made my bed with the same women and girls whose Christmas dinners, given by the welfare organizations, I had for several years "covered" as a reporter, but none of them recognized me.

I had some very funny experiences, as you may imagine, and collected a fund of observation and anecdote. One night, at the municipal night refuge, my cot was next to that of a very slatternly, unkempt old woman. I saw her, before going to sleep, take a chunk of German sausage out of a dirty bit of paper and put it under her pillow for safekeeping.

Next morning at the lodging-house breakfast, which consisted of bread and plain tea, she produced her treasured piece of bologna and, out of the goodness of her heart, broke it in two and—offered half to me! It was one of the hardest things I ever had to do, but she would have been mortally offended if I had refused, so I ate my bit!

I did for the Times a series running two months, "Woman in the Clutches of the Law," in which I covered all the prisons, reformatories, industrial schools and similar institutions, not as inmate this time, but as reporter. However, I had had the actual experience as one of the people who at some time land in these places, and was able to tell their story from a sympathetic standpoint.

In another series I covered all the spiritualists, clairvoyants, fortune-tellers, and the like. Out of perhaps 150 of these "practitioners" visited, I saw in only two or three cases anything which required more than the ordinary laws of psychology to explain. In these exceptional instances, the phenomena could be explained by thought-transference or telepathy.

Anyone who does this sort of first-hand investigation will never need to exaggerate, for I saw queerer things than I would dare to put on the screen, and proved to myself that truth is stranger than screen fiction, some of the critics to the contrary notwithstanding.

In my pursuit of "atmosphere" it was my high ambition to get arrested and sent to jail, and I was wavering between picking a pocket and breaking a window; but

my editor as well as my family put a veto upon this. They said I was too young for such an adventure, and my hopes of riding in "Black Maria" went glimmering.

During this time I was also contributing to the Sydney Mail, and writing for colonial and English magazines.

It seems strange to some that my early experiences in writing should have prepared me to write the comedy-drama upon which I am now engaged for the Realart Pictures Corporation. But it wasn't tragedy unalloyed that I found in the slums of Sydney—not by a long way! Indeed, my treatment of my material was almost entirely humorous, and readers used to say that it was added to, or "faked." But, as I said above, it was all truth—though not always *sober* truth.

So to the man or woman who wants to write for the screen, I say, "Get wisdom, get understanding" of people, the "submerged tenth" as well as the "upper crust." They're all pretty much alike, anyway, except in the way they talk and other superficial differences.

There are many ways to do it, of course, and I don't mean you shall all go to the poor-house for a week-end, or to jail for a "stretch." Just keep the common touch, and count no time lost that you spend talking with a fellow-being from an environment different htan your own. Learn to recognize and know those illuminating, characteristic, *pictorial* flashes in which people reveal themselves by the expressions and actions which "speak louder than words."



Elected

At a meeting of the stockholders of the recently erected Clubhouse of the Screen Writer's Guild, the following were elected as a Board of Directors: Marion Fairfax, Frederick Palmer, Ruth Ann Baldwin, Elmer Harris, Eugene Presbrey, Richard Willis, and Elmer Rice. Preparations are being made to tastefully furnish the club house, which is located at the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Las Palmas Avenue in Hollywood; and the finest possible service will be accorded the members and visiting friends. A chef, now employed in one of New York's most famous hostelries, is at present the recipient of a most bountiful offer from these scribblers of the shadow stage. The eminent photodramatists aim to accomplish solidarity through a hospitality which will welcome alike those who invade the future and those who recall the past.



PAIN is in some wise the artist of the world, which creates us, fashions us, sculptures us, and with the fine edge of a pitiless chisel. It limits the overflowing life; and that which remains, stronger and more exquisite, enriched by its very loss, draws thence the gift of a higher being.—*Michelet.*



THE highest development of the Nietzchean philosophy: The conceited sap who says that he never had a lesson in his life, and that he'd shoot himself if he couldn't write better photoplays than does Jeanie MacPherson.

Confidentially ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

By Frank E. Woods

IT is embarrassing to talk of oneself. If a deprecatory attitude is assumed, the writer is accused of reverse-English boasting; if he just comes out and tells how good he is, he is charged with lack of modesty. So we will endeavor to look for middle ground upon which to parade.

Early in life I determined to become a dominant factor in the motion picture industry, but there were innumerable delays and obstacles, owing to the dilatory tactics of the inventors of cinematography in inventing the same. One must live, however, so I took up newspaper work, while waiting for the development of what was to become the fifth industry of the United States. It was about twenty-five years before the invention was recorded, so I had quite a wait. However, I used the time to good advantage. Beginning as a newspaper carrier boy, I worked my way up gradually to the position of editor of a daily paper and a salary equal today to that of some of our most promising assistant cameramen. To anyone aspiring to a position as chief supervising director of a leading company in the motion picture industry, I can truthfuly and wisely advise him to begin as a newspaper carrier boy and spend twenty-five or thirty years writing pieces for newspapers on how to run the government, and other things.



I began writing for the screen, which hadn't as yet been christened the "silver sheet," while employed on the Dramatic Mirror in New York City. As a preliminary, I had startled the amusement world by reviewing some photoplays — that was back in 1908—and it almost cost me my job. Only a few in those days believed in a serious future for the motion picture, and written criticism of them was unheard of. My first compensation for writing a picture story was fifteen dollars, and I felt like a prospector who had stumbled head first into a gold mine. My output thereafter was only limited by the capacity of my typewriter and my physical endurance.

My first permanent affiliation in the motion picture business was with David W. Griffith, the producing chief for Biograph. Precious to that I had tried directing. There is an old saying that "every man thinks he can run a hotel and a newspaper." To which I can add, "direct a motion picture." Nearly anyone could — in those days, so I took a fling at it, for the now defunct Kinemacolor. I hasten to state, however, that its present moribund condition had no relation to my work. The process was not practicable. Neither was I, in a megaphone-wielding capacity, as some of my friends have assured me. Perhaps it was because I couldn't learn to shout.

At any rate, I went back to screen writing and editing, and when Mr. Griffith came to Los Angeles as head of the production activities of the old Reliance and Majestic companies, I came along as his producing executive. Triangle and Fine Arts were an outrgowth, and their history is known to practically everyone interested in motion pictures. Some of our most popular stars of today—and our most artistic and capable directors—received their education and first start at the studio at 4500 Sunset Boulevard.

It was during this experience that Mr. Griffith put my name on the screen as co-writer with himself of "The Birth of a Nation." Any of the later writers who have been similarly honored by the great D. W. will understand just how much part I really had in writing that continuity.

When Triangle disintegrated, I went with the Lasky Company as supervising director, a position created for me. This was something over three years ago, and as there has been no indication of anything to the contrary, I may be permitted to remain a while longer.

Of course I should add something about my hobby. It is small game hunting—tracking down tiny-brained cranks who are endeavoring to muzzle the film industry with an unreasoning, unreasonable censorship. If they succeed, it will mean the death of this wonderful art-industry, just as surely as similar restrictions applied to letters would sound the death knell of literature.



OBSESSIONAL

(After R. K.)

When Earth's last film is untainted
And the plots are twisted and dried,
And a movie actress is sainted,
And the youngest censor has died,
We shall rest, and, faith, we shall need it;
Lie down for an aeon or more,
Till the Master of all shall deed it
A time for the film of yore.

And none who were prudes shall be slighted,
They shall sit in a spiked chair
And view the pictures they blighted
And censored beyond repair.
And only the Devil shall praise them,
And only the Master shall blame;
And those who have suffered shall haze them
With torturing worth the name.

Then each of the censors shall sizzle;
Yea—each that the Devil employed
Shall burn to a grease spot and fizzle
On a pyre of celluloid.



Denials of rumors: Mack Sennett is not going to produce "Pelleas and Mellisande;" Ben Turpin has not eloped with Elsie Ferguson; Marie Prevost will not be starred as Lady Godiva; William de Mille will not film "Progress and Poverty"; Albert Rhys Williams has not written a photoplay for Conrad Nagle; Sid Grauman has not had his hair cut, and neither has Cecil de Mille. Al Wilkie has not joined the Epworth League. Rupert Hughes has not replied to the story about the celestial reception of "The Unpardonable Sin," which appeared in this month's Vanity Fair. King Vidor is not going to film "Jennie Gerhardt." C. Gardner Sullivan is not on the market for screen versions of books and plays. Frank E. Woods has not sold his pipe. Joe Jackson at Goldwyn's was never a bicycle rider or a baseball player. Ray Leek is not the handsomest leading man in pictures—but should be; at present he is chief publicist at Metro, which accounts for the fact that most of the girls in pictures would rather work at Metro than anywhere else. Thompson Buchanan denies that he said Tolstoi was the world's rarest humorist. Jeanie MacPherson has not visited Mars this month. Michael Boylan is not related to Ibanez. George Jean Nathan has not written a photoplay—neither has Dr. Wilbur Crafts.

The Two Real Renaissance

By Roy L. Manker

COL. WILLIAM SELIG and Sam Rork have, with one fell volley, swept the valleys, skies and mountain peaks of the motion picture art—have blasted and uprooted ancient monarchs of the film forest, and revealed to us an interminable area of virgin story fields!

The photodramatists in and around Los Angeles are oiling their Olivers and pruning their pencils, preparatory to invading this new land of inspiration and remuneration. In all possibility, there will be a demand for three to four times the number of screen stories in the fall of 1921 and the spring of 1922 as there has been in years and seasons past and gone.

Messrs. Selig and Rork announce the early release of a series of two-reel dramas, which have just been completed. They are going to continue making them, as their main policy. Stars of unquestionable merit in the five-reel photodrama have been signed.

The Selig-Rork bombshell has unquestionably caused a loud enough detonation to awaken vibrations under the cobwebbed layers of tradition and convention which have circumscribed the individual domes of other producers. The old-fashioned game of "follow the leader" will be played, synchronized to the melody of clinking gold. We have with us—beyond question—the two-reel Renaissance, and the photodramatist of today and tomorrow will soon be pocketing numerous and sundry substantial checks—his earthly reward for stories long since written, and pigeon-holed because these brain children could not be reared—at least by natural means—to the estate of mature five-reelhood. They were the luckless orphans of two-reel ideas, mistaken by an erstwhile inspired parent for embryonic five-reelers. But now the asylums of pigeonholes will be scoured, and these brain children legitimized.

The renascent two-reeler parallels the short story, the most popular literary pabulum of yesterday, today — and, without doubt, tomorrow. Our short story magazines are legion, and it is quite apparent that the nephews of Uncle Samuel like their entertainment served up a la Rainbow —and a little at a time. The wise screen scribbler will know in what direction lies a fair proportion of his future art expression —and the incidental lucre.

The two-reel photoplay will call for fine craftsmanship, in particular the adoption of subtler effects and more significant actions than are necessary in the evolvement of an excellent photodrama of extensive footage. With one or two bold strokes, the writer will have to paint an individual's history or indicate his every tendency. When he etches he will have to etch deep! He will have to work with delicacy and finesse, as does a goldsmith or a painter of miniatures. He will have to be truly learned in the finer perceptions of the photodramatist's art. His technique must be well nigh faultless.

In compression and concentration there is power. It is inhibited force that drives a locomotive. The coming two-reel photodramas will probably be more intense, more vivid, more powerful, than their elder brothers of five-reel stature. Moments of life will be detached from the vast hubbub, and mirrored on the screen as reflections of Eternity's high-water marks, wherein audiences may glimpse—in the fugitive seconds —life's deeper and more beautiful meanings, behind the illusion of circumstances and events.

The time has come. The day is here. The very dawn is upon us. The skilled photodramatist, trained to wield his pencil with telling pictorial strokes, may well face the future with equanimity, conscious of the fact that his market is about to be trebled in absorptive capacity.



Symbols



By Adam Hull Shirk

WILLIAM de MILLE

The Rock of Gibraltar.
George Bernard Shaw with the bark smoothed off.
Rodin's Thinker properly clothed and with a contemplative grin at the frailties of the world.

CECIL B. de MILLE

A many-faceted diamond scintillating from every facet.
An Oak tree in a Chinese forest.
Mount Vesuvius.
The Isles of Spice.
Knights in armor at a joust, but with unblunted lances.

JEANIE MacPHERSON

A Chinese Temple at Dusk.
Potential energy stored in a dynamo.
Sauce Piquant.

GEORGE MELFORD

Niagara Falls.
A crowd at a festival; a pitched battle on an open plain; classic jazz changing to a spirituelle.



The Side of Nirvana

By Ted LeBerthon

EDITOR OF THE PHOTO DRAMATIST

THE invariably intelligent BOOKMAN allowed its foot to slip in the May issue by printing "Moving Pictures, Books, and Child Crime," by Rowland C. Sheldon, General Secretary of the Big Brothers Movement.

Among other things, Sheldon writes: "How I wish that the men who write such scenarios and the men who produce them, could visit the criminals they have made" —apropos of Western thrillers.

Sheldon is a typical reformer. He hasn't happened to think about what the "bad" boys he speaks of would have done if they hadn't been wooed by the cinema's extravagant Injuns and cowpunchers—with their effective popguns. Before the advent of the wicked movies, boys read all the Nick Carter stuff extant—and those two terrible infants of Mark Twain's imagination; oh boy! Huck Finn and Som Sawyer performed deeds that would have stricken Brother Sheldon dumb.

Brother Sheldon, try to balance the books properly. Have you ever given a thought to the possible amount of good done by the movies for the American youth? True, you wax benevolent over "Homer Comes Home" and the Charles Ray pictures, but from your general narrow tone—especially where you speak of the Big Brothers as an organization combating the bad influence of the movies —I am inclined to place you as a "right thinker," and "one of the good old hum' folks." You snatched my breath away when you mentioned Sousa in the same paragraph with Beethoven. I shivered at the list of authors you suggested for juvenile digestion.

You're probably a good sort, Brother Sheldon, and doing a great deal of good in your own way. I'm no stronger for Western thrillers in books or cinemas than you are, and think the writers of them for the most part must be suffering from high blood pressure or rabies. However, America's children, from seven to seventy, seem to enjoy them. And in the last analysis, Rowland, aren't you sold on the Einstein stuff'? It's never the thing itself that counts, after all, but one's reaction to it.

I'm as strong as you are for Charlie Ray, but still believe that variety's the spice of life and the prevention of suicide. Just imagine, having to sit through a whole flock of stories about "the old hum' folks" and young Jasper strollin' thru the buttercups to meet little Sarah Ann. Now, on the square, Rowland, wouldn't you like to occasionally see Louis XV tweak Dubarry's toes, or—all enraptured—watch Norma Talmadge making love? If you haven't seen her, don't miss her next time she flickers around.

I am glad to hear that you want pure movies, although I don't know what you mean. Perhaps you don't either, which would make us fifty-fifty in a country where all men are created equal. All I can say is that you accomplished something when you broke into print in the BOOKMAN. Your article surely didn't belong there. After all, I forgive the BOOKMAN; for just as I don't think the motion picture art should be rapped because of a few wild westerns, I am inclined to pardon a magazine which prints so many inspiring articles, for its one venial sin.

The Vedantists are right: This world is a hall of illusions. Just as I was all primed to view the shocks, shudders, and convulsions of "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari," the American Legion youths swooped down on the theatre where it was "almost shown" and gently—with phizzes as firm as Gibraltar—requested the management to change its mind and policy. The curtailment of the picture's presentation was proper and

fitting, considering the low import tariff and the fact that the natives of Frankfort and Hamburg can produce an artistic cinema for about one-eighth of what it costs the boys on Wall Street. American labor must be protected. Thanks to the American Legion, a photoplay written by Upton Sinclair was substituted. How Upton must have chuckled.

Photodramatists have nothing to fear from a possible foreign film invasion. In fact, with a tariff of sufficient altitude making for economic equalization, our screen writers should welcome the overseas films. We need to be jarred from our provincial complacency; it will do us good to sniff the universal ozone. With isolation comes insularity and crystallization in our thought waves.

Now that Charlie Chaplin has been acclaimed the greatest artist of the times by several critics and writers of authority, who include in one broad sweep the international stage and screen, we will probably be harassed no longer by such hokum as "the Bernhardt of the screen." Henceforth it will be quite apropos to indulge in such flights of fancy as "the Pickford of the stage."

The Fundamentals of Censorship—Every man in the world should want to marry our Annabelle; apple pie is the only pie; "Way Down East" but not "Broken Blossoms"; "Lead, Kindly Light", but not "L'Apres Midi d'un Faun;" the double standard; the Truth Trust.

The big producers have ceased to genuflect before proud playwrights and tall browed booksters; they now acknowledge their heresy, and will no longer mortgage their silk shirts for long runners and best sellers. One producer—where did they ever get that name, producer?—scratched his rotunda with elegant gravity the other day and remarked: "I wouldn't be surprised if the people who read books and see plays feel as though seeing a photoplay version of the same is like marrying the same person twice; I actually believe they feel as though they're being subjected to twice told tales."

The light of truth sometimes shines from unexpected places. I heard a girl remark that she did not care to see the screen version of "Conrad in Quest of His Youth," because she had only recently read the book, and didn't feel as though she could enjoy a photoplay in which every scene would be anticipated. The little girl will not have to worry much longer. The big fellows who sign the checks shudder like an aspen leaf these days when some book broker forgets himself and lapses into five figures. The humble photodramatist who will dispose of a week's work for the quiet, unobtrusive sum of a couple of thousand, will find the doormats all properly lettered around the agencies and studios.

Liebestraum

The circulation manager of this magazine is a droll parcel. He says that any healthy, normal American whose vision soars beyond eating, drinking, sleeping, and first mortgages, should be on the market for expansion and expression to the extent of two dollars and a half a year for the PHOTODRAMATIST. He says any man with a sense of humor may send him a check for that amount, and feel that he has taken a step towards writing photoplays. He believes that the world is a pimple on the surface of Eternity, caused by the rubbing of Time against the Fourth Dimension, and that only a few saps who take themselves seriously will fail to plunge for the aforementioned two fifty.

L'Aprenti Socier

The advertising manager is willing to let space at one hundred dollars a page, lesser space accepted under protest. We reach book buyers, dramatic editors, newspaper reporters, scenario editors, public libraries, potential Jeanie MacPhersons, motion picture directors, theatre managers, and college professors—to say nothing of the general public. The advertising manager is willing—although he admits it hurts—to allow agencies fifteen per cent; he will also, with alacrity, shave two per cent for those who pay in advance. Circulation at present writing, thirteen thousand.



The Transmuters of Dreams

By Theodore Moracin

CALL yourself a dreamer, eh?—can't materialize your dreams—can't hold on to the evanescent dream long enough to clothe it in terms translatable to the silver screen? Well, your need is a common one; not at all hard to fill. For instance—

In the early days of the motion picture art-industry, people everywhere dispatched to the few film studios of that time their half-formed, half-baked ideas—they hadn't a tangible think to work on, as there were no sources of information. The scribblers of pseudo-scenarios were legion. The studios rejected practically everything submitted.

A man believed that the gulf between the dreamers of this nation and the studios of Filmland could be bridged. Frederick Palmer himself had achieved a record of fifty-two scenarios written and sold—and produced—in nine months; he surely was justified in believing that he possessed the ideal timber with which to construct the bridge.

Today the Palmer Photoplay Corporation is one of the most important factors in the motion picture industry, and as firmly rooted as an oak tree of a hundred years. Through its educational department, scores of people have learned and are learning the photodramatist's art. Through its sales department, innumerable flowers of the eighth art which would have otherwise "been born to blush unseen and waste their sweetness on the desert air," have reached the luminous square, and wafted their fragrance into the hearts and minds of the nation's photoplaygoers.

It is a fact that the Palmer institution stands alone. Competition has been conspicuously ephemeral. Today practically nothing is known of any other teacher of the art of writing for the films, and the Palmer organization is the only firmly established clearing house for screen stories.

By what fine alchemical processes are formless dreams transmuted into saleable manuscripts. What rare mechanism is this which so consistently discovers potencies in obscure writers, nurses the divine spark, then trains it into a sustained flame—finally marketing the product of the erstwhile latent talent?

Let us suppose that a Palmer student has progressed to the point of sending in his or her first story and has—with the aid of a two-cent stamp—sped the mental offspring on its way.

The postman delivers the long, bulky envelope to the mail clerk at the Palmer offices, which occupy almost an entire floor of the huge I. W. Hellman Building in Los Angeles. And now—the processes of transmutation start.

The scenario is carried by a rosy-cheeked youngster in her early teens—the Palmer office boys are girls—past a long row of offices, offices which hum with a cheerful activity, offices brimful of typing girls, bustling clerks—to the office of Mr. D. E. Davenport.

D. E. Davenport, formerly editor of Photoplay Journal, and the writer of a host of successful photoplays—as well as several novels and stage plays—assists Frederick Palmer in the criticism of student work. It is in his department that the newly arrived story is first given a thorough reading and criticism. However, it is not within anyone's province to pedantically gloat over the scenario's shortcomings; carefully, studiously, sympathetically, it is read and re-read—there is but one objective, that of welding, from the heterogeneous matter submitted, a worth-while story. Weaknesses are indicated and suggestions are made—if necessary—and the story returned to the author for revision. A story may be returned several times for revision, until it is deemed worthy of being placed in the hands of the sales department. In rare instances, a story approaches perfection at

the start, in which case it is sent immediately to the sales department. More often, however, it may be handed over to the reconstruction department.

William E. Wing, head of the reconstruction department, has written screen stories for the past twelve years, six of which were spent with D. W. Griffith—the remainder with Vitagraph, Selig and independent productions. He is perhaps the most prolific writer in all Filmdom, already having over four hundred produced photodramas to his credit, as well as several hundred comedies and short-reel subjects. Fifteen of his five-reel brain children are scampering across the 1921 screen—and the year is but half over.

Within Mr. Wing's office—shut the door. Sit down. Perceive. A story lays before him; kou know that it's a good story by the friendly gleam in the reconstruction chieftain's eyes—yes, all the fundamentals are there—fairly well marshalled, too—student has the divine spark. Wing nods his head respectfully while reading the manuscript. "Great stuff," he says, as Kate Corbaley comes in from the next office; "needs polishing up a bit—it's a little amateurish in finish—and then it's yours, Mrs. Corbaley."

Kate Corbaley is manager of the Palmer sales department. She has a keen instinct for the saleable story and an intimate knowledge of current photoplay requirements at the myriad studios. She knows where the best money is paid for some certain type of photoplay. She deplores and despises lost motion, and when a story is placed in her hands, she knows just where the chances are best for disposing of it at a nice fat figure. She is the author of many successful photoplays, among which were "Gates of Brass," featuring Frank Keenan, and some of Mrs. Sidney Drew's most effective comedy dramas.

Now, when Mr. Wing slightly refashions a photoplay, before turning it over to Mrs. Corbaley, he does not necessarily change the primary elements or important characteristics of the story. If he does so, he first consults the student-author; then, with that individual's approval and permission, whips the photodrama into an artistic mould—that it may entice and intrigue the approval of the most fastidious producer. A carbon copy is made, registered, and filed away, and the delectable play committed to the astute Mrs. Corbaley, who—with her access to the inner circles of the studios, and being herself a cynosure for the hungry eye of the producer—knows just where the brain child will receive immediate and tender consideration.

The producers as a general rule know—by now—that they must have a real story to interpret; and they know very well the location of "Story Headquarters." The student-author in due course of time receives a check—usually running into four figures; sometimes amounting to more than he or she has made at some "job" in a whole year.

The men who have guided the Palmer ship through dangerous shoals and troublesome waters into the vast ocean of high achievement deserve mention. They have charted a hitherto uncharted sea; have opened up a great outlet for our national art expression.

Frederick Palmer, President and Director of Education, has been activley engaged in the realms of the silent art for over nine years. He has written several hundred photoplays which have been produced by practically all the nationally known organizations. He has worked as a staff writer, scenario editor, and as a free-lance author.

Roy L. Manker, Vice-President and General Manager, is a former newspaper, magazine and screen writer. His official position is analagous to that of a newspaper's managing editor. In conference with department heads, he gives and takes advice with equal thoughtfulness. He is the quiet type of enthusiast. His generalship has been responsible in a great measure for the friendly attitude of motion picture producers, the press, and the public, towards the Palmer institution.

H. E. Teter, Second Vice-President, is the man who originally financed the Palmer Photoplay Corporatino. He had the vision and courage to back up his belief in the Palmer ideal with his private fortune.

S. M. Warmbath, Secretary and Treasurer, now directs the finances, and is responsible for much of the efficiency so conspicuous in the Palmer process of "transmuting dreams into gold."

As one of the concrete proofs of the stability and intrinsic worth of the Palmer institution, it has attracted to its Advisory Council such mighty figures of Cinemadom as Thomas H. Ince, Cecil Be deMille, Lois Weber, Frank E. Woods, Allan Dwan, Rob

Wagner, James R. Quirk, and C. Gardner Sullivan.

Among others who have contributed valuable material to the Palmer Department of Education are Frank Lloyd, Jeanie Macpherson, Clarence Badger, Denison Clift, Al Christie, Colonel Jasper Ewing Brady, George Beban and Hugh McClung.

By eternal, immutable law, we only attract favorable elements in exact ratio to our mental and spiritual growth. The Palmer Photoplay Corporation today maintains the good will and collaboration of the most advanced minds now functioning in the realms of cinema art.

Farmers, grocery clerks, housewives, stenographers, bankers, lawyers, educators, and factory hands, among others, have sold stories through the Palmer Plan—expressing themselves in the imperishable language of pictures. Pictures reach to the common heart of mankind, and this new universal language is doing more to reveal humanity to humanity than has any art or science in recorded history.

Photoplay writing, in the broadest ethical and philosophical sense, is beyond question the most useful pursuit possible to any man or woman. Its applied art creates a story that is the basis for a motion picture, in the making of which are blended practically all the fine arts; a motion picture that will raise the level and widen the range of life for millions of humankind.

The Palmer student of the present day has much to thank the Fates for—for although the student should fail to sell a single story, the broad mental training received in studying the course should prove of advantage in meeting the world at any angle. Such famous novelists as Rex Beach, Rupert Hughes and Sir Gilbert Parker; and such playwrights as Edward Knobloch, Elmer Harris and Thompson Buchanan, come all the way to Los Angeles to learn "the language of pictures." And they learn at the studios from many of the same men and women whose composite advice and collaboration is transmitted, through correspondence, to the student of the Palmer Plan.

Theodore Roosevelt once said: "I look upon correspondence instruction as one of the most wonderful and phenomenal developments of this age."

Rob Wagner, famed author and photodramatist, in a lecture to students of the University of Southern California, said: "I know of only one way outside the studios themselves of intelligently learning the technique of photoplay writing—and that is through the department of education of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation."

The Palmer name will probably be remembered, in a far distant future when the sands of time have obliterated most others—for the influence of the educational department of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation upon the creative phase of the motion picture art has been powerful and profound. This institution will always stand as a symbolical figure of the dawn of a new art, through which formless dreams were first transmuted into photoplay form, and an endless vista of creative expression revealed to the masses of America.



Fade-out

Their lips met.
The night grew old.
They knew it not.



PERHAPS, with your story ideas, you are like the marooned professor who found a field of beans. He didn't know how to cook beans, so he starved to death.



CLIMAX: The amateur photodramatist's Frankenstein.

Real Comedy

By Thompson Buchanan

The most effective comedy is that enacted against a close-up background of real tragedy. That's what made "The Kid," with Charlie Chaplin, a rare work of art.

Real comedy is impossible without a background of pathos; custard pie hurling and the other slapstickian stuff evokes a momentary guffaw, but does not plumb our risibilities. Comedy in its deeper and finer conception may translate life, and the meaning of the eternal drama of love and death, as truly as the most terrible and sublime tragedy.

When our emotions are warm and vibrating in a key of pathos, we are most susceptible to the playing of cool waves of laughter across our heartstrings.

William de Mille understands real comedy; he is one of the few directors who is master enough of his art to momentarily unmask tragedy and disclose, with a tender gleam of humor, the heaven beyond. Wholesome, tolerant laughter will some day be realized as the human race's master key, with which we will unlock the cells of confusion and achieve a final liberation—beyond the need of idols, beyond good and evil, beyond Life and Death.



Want Collaborators

The following Palmer students desire to get in touch with other students in their respective communities for the purpose of collaboration or mutual study

Akron, Ohio: B. Blair Young, 968 Bell St.

Brooklyn, N. Y.: Charles J. Hausman, 492 Greene Ave.

Atlanta, Georgia: Wm. B. Ramsey, 389 Cherokee Ave.

Birmingham, Ala.: H. R. Waite, 703 N. 19th St.

Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Mrs. Albert C. Conklin, care General Delivery.

Chicago, Ill.: F. W. Ickes, 1221 E. 65th St.

Cleveland, Ohio: Emil J. Mauek, 3468 West Forty-ninth St.

Detroit, Mich.: Harold R. Knapp, 539 Melbourne Ave.

Duluth, Minn.: Jack Jones, Jr., Hermantown Road.

East Palestine, Ohio: S. Mack Williams, Box 323.

Elgin, Ill.: Elmer E. Schenet, 466 E. Chicago St.

Hiawasse, Ga.: Walter E. Warren, Box 76.

Jersey City, N. J.: Estelle Max, 290 Jackson Ave.

Kansas City, Mo.: Aline L. Hayes, 3535 College Ave.

Little Falls, N. Y.: Mrs. Mary E. Stewart Evans, 332 So. Ann St.

London, England: Jack Couzens, 1 Stokenchurch St., Fulham, S. W. 6.

Los Angeles, Cal.: Mrs. Leo Lehmann, 315½ Gertrude St.

Los Angeles, Calif.: F. H. G. Seidenstucker, 562-B East 16th St.

Minneapolis, Minn.: Vera Smith Greenough, 4841 Lyndale Ave., South.

Missoula, Mont.: Leo Bernard Mayotte, Shapard Hotel.

Montreal, Quebec: Bruce Wilkin, 2621 Hutchison St.

New Brighton, Staten Isl. N. Y.: Carl L. Grupen, 17 St. Marks Place.

New York City: Pasquale J. Vitacco, care Y. M. C. A., 222 Bowery.

New York, N. Y.: David W. Alpha, 512 West 140 St.

San Francisco, Cal.: M. S. Yerkovich, 67 Fourth St.

New York, N. Y.: Charles G. Scholz, 2471 Davidson Ave.

New York, N. Y.: D. W. Alpha, 522 West 140th St.

Omaha, Neb.: Frank E. Parkins, 6309 Binney St.

Parkersburg, Pa.: Oric C. Peters, 328 First St.

Pittsburgh, Pa.: Louis B. Markell, 558 Allison Ave.

Cebu, Cebu, P. I.: Mr. Francisco Yap, P. O. B. 247.

Porterville, Pa.: Norman G. Wimer, R. F. D. No. 3.

Portland, Ore.: Miss Anna Finkelstein, 605 Fifth St.

Passaic, N. J.: Mary M. Yokank, 43 Dayton Ave.

Ranger, Tex.: J. A. Cowart, Box 1281.

Springfield, Mo.: Lillian Martin, 1014 N. Boulevard.

St. Louis, Mo.: Clarence F. Striegel, 6179 Westminster Place.

Syracuse, N. Y.: John R. Roock, 106 Hier Ave.

Washington, D. C.: Mrs. Rose B. Rehlander, 1405 Rhode Island Ave.

Toronto, Canada: Daniel Taft, 330 Brock Avenue.

CHASTE READER: You are misinformed; Cecil B. DeMille is not going to produce any of Phillip Moeller's "Five Somewhat Historical Plays."

SIGN in front of Grauman's Million Dollar Theatre: "Thomas Meighan in The City of Silent Men with Lois Wilson." FilmTruth please copy.

Philip Bartholomae

By George Landy

ONE of the earliest playwrights to turn his play into a scenario for film purposes was Philip Bartholomae, the author of a number of stage successes, and whose most recent screen plots include "The Black Panther's Cub," starring Florence Reed, and "The Outside Woman," starring Wanda Hawley. It is not only as a pioneer in this field that Bartholomae's work deserves consideration here, but also for its intrinsic merit and the rich variety of his original scenarios and screen adaptations.



This is the day of the author in the world of the motion picture, but when Bartholomae first adapted one of his own stage plays for filming, it was a revolutionary procedure, and his success did much to overcome the prejudice then existing against "outside writers." The first play translated into a scenario by him was "Over Night," which had also been his first stage play, and which he adapted for use by Vivian Martin, then a star in World Pictures. Immediately thereafter he performed similar service with "Little Miss Brown" for the same star. Incidentally, it was this latter play which had originally served to introduce Madge Kennedy, until then a comparatively unknown ingenue, to Broadway.

For some time after this, the screen claimed him exclusively, and among some of the other pictures which he turned out were "The Serpent" for Theda Bara and "Daredevil Kate" for Virginia Pearson—both at that time were with Fox. Shortly thereafter he became head of the scenario department of Pathe, and wrote a number of original stories as well as the continuities for this company's stars, including Irene Castle, Mollie King, Gladys Hulette and Pearl White. These were followed by the books of a number of musical comedy successes, beginning with "Very Good Eddie," which set a new standard of sprightly brightness in the field of girl shows; "When Dreams Come True," the musical comedy in which Joseph Santley and Ivy Sawyer appeared, and "Over the Top," the revue featuring Justine Johnstone, which was her last appearance before her recent debut in motion pictures. Bartholomae also wrote the book and lyrics of the first "Greenwich Village Follies" with John Murray Anderson, and here, too, he contributed largely toward innovating a distinctively new brand of theatrical entertainment.

Innovations, ti can be seen from his career, form a constant quality in Bartholomae's work. This may be due partly to his early environment, for Bartholomae originally started out to be an engineer, and studied for three years at the Rennsaeller Polytechnic Institute in Troy, but discovered that he would rather bridge a plot than plot a bridge.

"Fundamentally," says Bartholomae, "there is a sameness about the plot for the screen play or for the stage play. You must have your story, and it must be told so that it will grip your audience. It is just a case of developing your basic dramatic idea with the particular material at hand. For a stage presentation you must select your several scenes into which you can bring your characters logically, and have them unfold such parts of the story before the eyes of your audience, that it can feel any events which transpire off-stage during the action or in the intervals between the acts. In your photoplay you have no limitations of time or space. Everything you want to be shown can be shown, everything you want to be done can be done. This is all, of course, on the understanding that you will be reasonable in your demands on the producer. Do not expect him to evolve any effects that mean an inordinate outlay of money or time, and remember that, even though the motion picture camera has a wide field, there do exist certain limits to its capabilities, and you must respect them. In fact, in writing for the stage or for the screen—just as in undertaking any other profession or work—you should first study your field and the resources at your disposal.

"Of course, we have all heard about the butcher's apprentice who wrote a scenario on a piece of brown wrapping paper and sent it to Hollywood, where the eagle eye of some particular producer chanced to light on it, so that he sent the said apprentice a check for one thousand dollars for the idea. I have met hundreds of scenario writers and have corresponded with thousands of them, but I never met this butcher's apprentice, or anybody who had met him. Even though he does exist somewhere, there is no doubt that he would have gotten much more for his story—and could have followed it up by other work along this line—if he had prepared himself for the profession of scenario writing.

"There is this peculiar fact about the writing of scenarios or plays: Whereas everyone will admit that you must study your trade, either in theory or in practice, before you can hope to attain any real success in it, many people still believe that they can sit down and dash off a scenario on some rainy evening between dinner and bedtime. These are the people who always tell you of the great screen story they are going to write some day, and they die before they ever get to writing it. Each of us has lived personally or has touched on at least one true story of life that has dramatic power and value, but we do not know how to translate that story to the typewritten sheet, nor into what form to put it. There are those of us who really have the dramaturgic talent—but, just as the vast majority, these few should also learn the technique of its trade before entering the field of scenario writing.

"In short, if you have scenario ideas, and are willing to go through the journeyman period of apprenticeship and study, you will succeed. But you must go through this schooling. Therein lies success."

Philip Bartholomae voices the essence of common sense. He realizes that the spirit must be clothed; that no art expression can be formless, and still appeal. He knows through experience that the untrained photodramatist faces a problem analogous to that of the potential yet unschooled musician who cried out: "I blow into this horn such beautiful sounds—and they come out so disappointing."



Greetings!

We are intensely interested in the progress of the PHOTODRAMATIST, as we feel it is what we have been looking for—a real, live study magazine, suited to the needs of the photoplay writers, sans patent medicine ads, sans a string of cheap pictures which serve primarily to hold together cheaper would-be literature which the intelligently-minded individual must wade through ordinarily to glean the occasional kernel.

The Palmer Photoplay Club of Los Angeles unanimously agrees this is the sort of stuff we need in the upbuilding of better photoplays, for a better grade of pictures, for a greater Photoplay Art.

We wish you success and progress and all good things. If we can help you in any way, give us the sign.

Cordially yours,
THE PALMER PHOTOPLAY CLUB
M. NEGLEY, Secretary

Some Studio Secrets

By Bradley King
of the Thos. H. Ince Staff

MOST of us—at least in the days of our "beginnings"—have sent forth our brain child and wondered, from the hour we dropped it into the mail box until the hour of its return, just what was happening to it—principally if it was being read at all.

It might help if you and I would for a few minutes pretend that we were one of the readers in one of the large studios. We'll call it the "Bee" Studio, for convenience—and it has advertised the fact that it is in the market for dramas suitable for super-productions—that is, for a six or seven reeler.

Because of this fact we find our desk piled high with manuscripts. Seventy original scenarios, besides a score of magazines and books, all shouting to be read—and all one day's offerings! Is it any wonder that your scenario or mine is not returned or accepted by return mail? Hardly—yet I know many an impatient person who expects some kind of notification immediately and gets insulted if it doesn't arrive.

Coming back to the business at hand, we decide to go through the original scenarios first. Sitting back, we open all the envelopes, get ready our little cards for criticism and filing—then get busy.

The first story we pick is in long hand—written in pen and ink. That's discouraging, as it takes long to read, and we wonder if we are going to be able to make it all out. There's no cast of characters—no short synopsis—nothing but the story, which must be waded through to find out what it is all about—so we're a little prejudiced against it before we even begin—but we do. We find that the story is an amusing little domestic comedy that might, if worked up, make something for a fluffy ingenue lead, but the Bee Studio, because of its *advertised* need, couldn't possibly use it. If we feel particularly nice, we might write a note on the scenario, advising typing, building, and submitting elsewhere, then we fill out the card with the why and wherefore of the story and the reason for its rejection—and pick up the next.

This is typewritten and contains a lengthy letter to Mr. Bee himself, requesting a personal reading of the scenario and extolling its marvelous merits. Skeptical, we decide to take a chance on relieving Mr. Bee of the job and read it ourselves. At the end of the tenth page and the fifth murder we gasp and give it up. Why is it that some people believe drama consists of a string of murders—regardless of plot or reason? Every page or two—as in this story—someone is found dead. Shot or stabbed or drowned or any old way; and who they were or why they were killed—no one ever knows—least of all the author. Murders are disagreeable things at the best, and have to be well worth the writing up to be touched on at all. The public is not morbidly inclined and objects to wanton killing or the finding of victims unless there is a reason strong enough to overcome the natural aversion.

So, "passing up" the bloodthirsty script, we take up a scenario which consists of a half sheet of paper, typewritten, but without punctuation, which reads something like this:

> "Mary is a beautiful cloak model has a country sweetheart rich buyer wants her gets her through a false marriage old sweetheart finds out and kills him Mary has a baby and goes back to the old sweetheart who forgives her have many more plots like this will sell them cheap let me know right away as other people are after them."

Catching our breath from the dizzy swirl on the heights of this original story, we decide to let one of the "other people" have the masterpiece, and go on to the next scenario.

This has a cast sheet, neatly typed, and we take a new lease on life as we see on the second page a brief synopsis of the story

that follows. As we read it we feel a tinge of regret, for the story has merit—but never, these days, would it pass the board of censorship. And I would advise, right here, that any aspiring writer give the rules of the different boards of censorship the once-over before writing a story. No producer wants to put a quarter of a million dollars into a story that can only be shown over half the country. They want an even chance to get their money back, at least, and as we read other stories on our desk we find many where the central situation or the theme itself is one that is now taboo.

And some—we find them as we go on—deal with plots so old that we wonder the moss doesn't show on them. The old tale of double identity—of dual roles—of misled country maidens—of bloodthirsty vampires—of the poor man who turns out to be a millionaire, or of the poor girl who is really an heiress. Ye gods! Over and over we read the same thing, till we wonder why people will see a story, rush home and write one almost like it. For that is what, unconsciously, is being done every day. We see a poor picture and we say, "I could write one better than that." And we sit down and rehash the old plot a little, and maybe we do improve on the original—but we forget that the reason why the original was so poor was because the idea in back of it was growing whiskers!

Then we come across a meek-looking scenario, with no letter extolling its virtues—a story simply told, that runs without fits or starts or stops to tell the director how to direct it—a story that shows in picture-words the life and feelings of the characters—a story that, in spite of some poor spots, *has a story to tell* and tells it on to the end, building up to a climax—a story that had evidently been thought and worked over—and, delighted, we pass it on to the Editor himself for special reading. From him, it goes higher up, until it rests on the desk of Mr. Bee himself—for the final decision; and, whether it happens to strike his fancy or not, somewhere that story will sell, for it holds the stuff that scenarios are made of.

So, out of the seventy scripts on our desk, we find maybe four or five that might be used — and most of those returned are rejected because behind them lay a lack of thought or definite knowledge of the why and why not of a scenario.

Now we're not the reader any more—but Mr. Ooozoo in Oshkosh, who waits impatiently for the mailman. Maybe our story was the one of blood and thunder—maybe we're the one who had ideas that wouldn't pass the censors—maybe we're the modest one who offered to direct the picture and play the leading part—for such offers sometimes accompany scripts—at any rate, we're not one of those whose brain-child was passed on to those higher up.

Our script comes back, and, after the first disappointment, what do we do? Sulk—swear? Know it never even got read? No—we sit down, reread the script, and try to figure out what is the matter, that the Bee Studio did not accept it. If it wasn't the kind they wanted, that's the answer, and after mentally kicking ourselves for not finding that out first, we send it somewhere else. Maybe someone has told us about the censors, and we buckle down to see if that was the trouble—or, maybe, we shut the script in our desk, go see a few good "movies," and compare the strength of their plots with our own.

For this much we know. Our stories are read—and returned for a definite reason; and if we really have the "gift of the gods," we're going to sit tight, and keep on studying and writing until we can tell that story in the right way and the right person reads it. For, if we have a story to tell, there is a place to tell it and someone to listen—but if we haven't a story to tell, nor the willingness to swallow our egotism and learn what's wrong with our telling of it, we'd better just drop out now and give the other fellow a chance. For more than any other profession in the world does the profession of writing require patience, study, observation and sincere effort, and only to those willing to travel this road does success come—but it *does* come if we stick to it, and in these days it is apt to arrive much sooner than we expect. Original stories were never so greatly in demand, but never was their quality demanded to be so high. The victory goes as always—to the strong and persevering; but those who sit at the top now traveled at some time the discouraging road of rejection slips—and that's an encouraging thought when you figure up your monthly postage bill.



Wm. E. Wing Replies
to a Certain High Brow Author

My dear Mr. ————:

May I reply to your letter in the same friendly, personal manner in which you wrote? I am sure I can, and that will allow us to get on famously.

First, let us talk of the two manuscripts you submit. They are delightful *sketches,* my dear ————.

You write like an angel, but one has to plot like the devil to get there on the screen. I know, for I dallied with the pen and filled columns with descriptive matter, persiflage and conversation for many years, under the delusion, if you like, that I was writing fiction. I did some alleged one-act plays; I even deceived myself that I was setting down, at times, humor.

I also essayed to yank the familiar tear from the moist optic.

Ten years ago I sneaked in under the tent of the motion picture show, and have had to carry water to the elephant ever since. I had seen such bum performances that I thought it only right to walk right up and fix things, thereby earning the tearful gratitude of Mr. Griffith, Mack Sennett, and others. For hadnt I sat in the old machine at the exhibition and learned all about the switch, the gears, and the pedals, to say nothing of the brakes?

And what kind of undying gratitude did Messrs. Griffith, Sennett, et al., hand out to humble yours? First pity, then sandpaper. Yep; they said that brushing me up would do no good, so they sandpapered me. And I have had to sandpaper myself throughout the eternal ten years, although I have performed for nothing save the circus ever since.

Maybe some of that "worthless balderdash" you have seen on the screen was mine. But—and don't let this roll off your knife—I eventually wrote the stuff that *registered on the screen,* and I got away with it!

You can't make your friend quit eating fried tripe because, to your mind, it is an unbeautiful dish for a human. He wants it, and he will get it. If you will not serve it to him in your cafe, he will go elsewhere and pay his tripe money away to a stranger. If you want to keep his trade—*feed him tripe,* even if you have to hold your nose while serving him. . . . .

But the movies—at least the major portion of them—have done away with tripe. In fact, they are demanding food that the average cafe cannot serve. They have come to writers who felt that their wares were angel food, to be served only to the intellectually and spiritually fitted humans.

Big themes do not even jar the average studio editor now. You couldn't stun one with a theme as great as the mystery of the creation itself.

He has forsaken tripe, but he now demands pate de foi gras! What do you know about that?

But he won't have even this, if it is cooked according to the magazine formula, or the recipe which exists in the mind of the successful fiction writer—that is, not always. Nope! He wants Tobasco in it!

One specification calls for description, feeling expressed in *words,* and clever conversation.

The movie maw wants its dish served hot with theme, and thought backed by action. You see, Mr. Movie is using practically the same ingredients, but he is adding pep.

Despite the Volsteads of printers' ink, he wants something with a "kick." Maybe this kick does not come from the mule of commerce, or the trusty, argumentative Colts. It may not come from the burning building or the heroine who has become a chronic in falling over the cliff. It might reach up to the seats of the mighty and draw therefrom the "mental kick." But it is an active quality that makes itself felt when seen—and felt hard.

Paprika will not do.

The one-half of 1 per cent stuff is not even popular in the movies. If you were deaf there wouldn't be much fun in sitting

$5 worth in a theater where an actionless play was talking itself politely through three of your precious hours.

Even if you saw an aged father remove a brute from the earth with a gun, with the police "winking" at the vengeance, as in your "Clean Get-away" story, it wouldn't fill up much of those three hours; or, on the other hand, it would not eat up many yards of the 5,000 feet of film necessary to a feature film.

And, you must admit, brother, that the incident itself is not particularly new to life or fiction.

But what a neat, nifty and effective little story you do make of it, Mr. ———. You certainly do. How you do put the picture over in a few clean-cut sentences. And it registers, too.

So does "Rose of Washington Square." The idea of the "man in the case" brought to the realization (through conscience) of the enormity of his act against the girl, and making it right by marrying her—confess now, is it new? Is it an old story told even in a "different" way? Is it presented with such unusual incident as to make it seem new? Verdict of "Not Guilty."

But it is sweetness itself; so satisfactory. I'm glad I read it. Those things brighten up things for all of us.

Photoplay writing is a new game for anyone who has not been baptized, my dear Mr. ———. There is not a successful man or woman now in the game who did not have to become a student to get the "inside," and who has not remained a student every hour since he took the kindergarten course. It is "another man's" game, even to the writer of fiction and stage successes. If you don't think so, ask some of the professional writers you know, how many of them have made a continued success of writing photoplays from the beginning, without going to the trouble of discovering what makes the wheels go around.

So, when you state, my dear, that you "are not looking for a course of instructions in photoplay writing, but feel that all you need is a market," you are singing an old and very sad refrain in my ears. You "have the ammunition and are ready to shoot, if we will but give you the range."

It can't be done with the two incidents you sent in, brother, for you haven't enough powder to reach the target, only enough to make a little smoke.

That one may hurt, but it is intended in the kindliest manner. More than I have had such happy dreams, but have had to be "kicked alive," as the western picture story has it.

Did you happen to attend the dinner of the Authors' League when Sir Gilbert Parker and other fiction celebrities spoke, some months ago? If so, you heard the creator of "The Right of Way" declare that he was going to California, right into a studio to *study* the new art of writing for the screen. Eleanor Glyn is doing it; Rupert Hughes is doing it; Knobloch is doing it; Elmer Harris and others are doing it. And do you know that each one has a trained studio writer at his elbow, even now after months of servitude, converting his or her plots into the right kind of material for the films? Either one will tell you that he is a student, believe me.

No, brother, the fellow who has music in his soul can't star on the concert stage before he has allowed an instructor to file his voice.

My little Bill is no speed demon on his kiddie car, but I'll stack him up against Ralph DePalmer, in an aeroplane.

I won't attempt to criticize your two stories, brother. They deserve praise as stories, but the cruel studio editor wants what he wants and—outside of a modern miracle—that can only be understood by the student in the studio, or the student who will conscientiously undertake his course at home, giving it the same amount of concentration and endeavor that he would give a course in law or engineering.

In closing, a happy, happy thought intrudes. If, as you state, our eminent authors are emitting "balderdash" for the screen, that should leave the field wide open for the newcomer who has the real peruna and is "ready to shoot."

Very sincerely.



CLOSE-UP—The clause in a star's contract which converts many an excellently written scenario into a photoplay catastrophe.

Allyn Lorraine's Letter
to Frederick Palmer

1637 Wilcox Avenue, Hollywood,
California, May 11, 1921.

My dear Mr. Palmer:

It has always been my belief that appreciation is a jewel laid on the altar of honest endeavor, when that appreciation is timely; and this letter is intended in that spirit.

When I became a student of the Palmer Plan, my knowledge of the scenario "as she should be wrote" could have been expressed by the algebraic symbol X. I will not say, now, that after intensive study of the Palmer Plan that I know all about scenarios, but I will and must say that I know all about them (technique, construction, etc.) that it is possible for an earnest, painstaking, personally interested Master of the Art of scenario writing to teach. I thank you for the knowledge you have so skillfully passed on to me; indeed, I am intensely grateful to you for so skillfully imparting it, for your personal interest in me whenever I called on you for advice or citicism.

Due to the knowledge obtained through the Palmer Plan, I was literally hoisted into a position in one of the largest studios in the West. My experience there has been one long joy. I elected to learn all angles of the business so, contrary to the usual procedure, I went into the "Prop" room; it is a most interesting place, believe me.

I have been introduced to the fur-lined molasses jug, have had the plate-glass wheel barrow brought to my notice, have seen a gentleman goose lay an egg in a picture; also, I have made the acquaintance of trained Siberian snakes that crawl up a long macaroni ladder and say "Mamma" when the top round is reached. Nor is this all. Cuban reindeer that play the bull fiddle have entertained me with confetti concertos in the key of Y; Mexican walursses have danced La Paloma for me amid the sands of Timbuctoo; trained cooties (old friends!) have been close-upped on the end of a fair lady's nose—under the microscope, I have watched them weeping because they were homesick and their gypsy father was a long way off. Cows that play the violin feelingly have been my intimates. Jassackasses that eat weinies and drink near beer are no strangers to me.

I have seen lady "stars" eating peas with a knife; I myself have lunched on beans and hash in the cafeteria between Napoleon and the Wahoop of Wisteria.

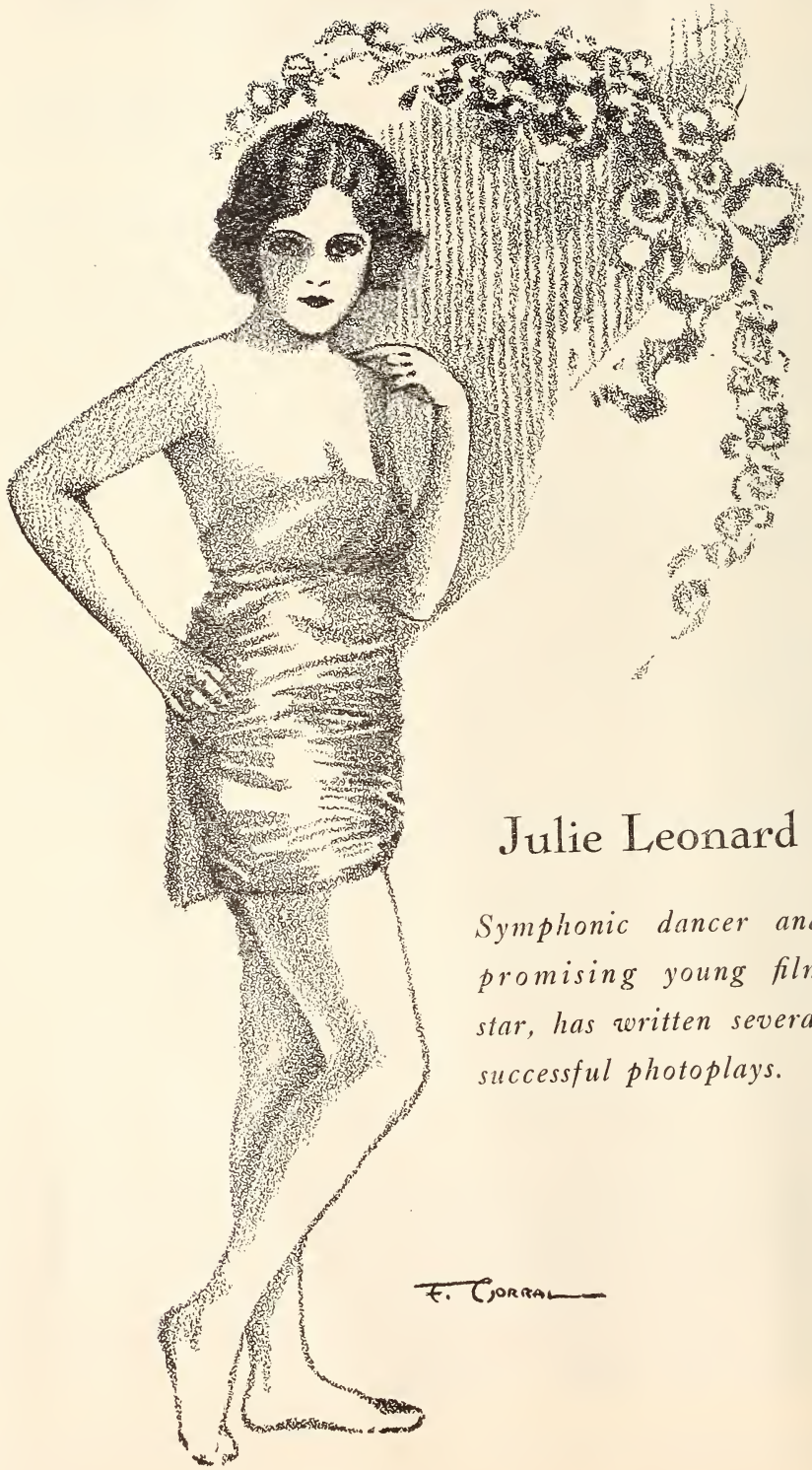
Now, I am "lining myself up" to go into the scenario department, better equipped for the serious business of scenario writing because of my experience in the "Prop" room, an experience that is invaluable, to my mind, because in the "Prop" room is centered all the gossip and honest criticisms, roughly expressed by the "boys" on every picture being shot "on the lot," criticisms made without fear or favor; and, take it from me who knows, those same "boys" know good pictures from bad.

I am extremely optimistic, thanks to the Palmer Plan and to you; to every student of the Palmer Plan I would say:

After you have absorbed the Palmer Plan, after you have let it soak into your brain, then—it is up to you; mortal man cannot do more for you than Mr. Palmer has done; stir up your own brains, and study, study, study; out from the chaff of endless writing will come, perhaps, just one scenario that is worth while, and that one scenario will amply repay you for your time and sacrifices, if you have made any.

Assuring you from the bottom of my heart of my own deep gratitude to you for your skillful piloting through the hazards of ignorance into the smiling seas of knowledge of scenario writing, I beg to remain,

Very truly yours,
ALLYN LORRAINE.



Julie Leonard

Symphonic dancer and promising young film star, has written several successful photoplays.

Gossip Street

Chapter I

The kissless wife, of whom so much has recently been heard in the divorce courts, has her masculine counterpart in the kissless husband in George Loane Tucker's latest photoplay, "Ladies Must Live." The role of the kissless husband is played by Robert Ellis and the kissless wife by Betty Compson.

Louise in Tights

Louise Fazenda does not devote her entire time and thought to the making of eccentric comedies. She is a steady contributor to the national motion picture magazines. Her "Impressions" of the screen folk have awakened wide comment both in the local film colony and among the fans throughout the entire country. Asked to give an impression of herself she wrote: "A Tolstoy heroine in tights."

Arctic Humor

Capt. Lloyd L. Wardell, a Palmer Student, does not believe that environment affects the writing of photoplays. He lives away up in the icy solitudes of Alaska, in the town of Juneau, but is evidently quite able to project his consciousness from the majestic though desolate quietude of the Arctic to the frivolous hubbub of an American metropolis. He won one of the cash prizes offered last month by FILM FUN with his "Matchmaking Matrons," a two-real scenario of a brilliant, satirical type, replete with startling complications.

Griffith Buys

Katherine B. Hamill and Millie Binks of Salt Lake City, Palmer students and collaborators in several successful photoplays, recently sold a photoplay to F. A. Todd, who in turn sold it to D. W. Griffith.

At Santa Ana, California, over one hundred and fifty representative citizens, led by Superior Judge Thomas, conferred with Frederick Palmer in a discussion of motion picture censorship. As a result of the conference, a more friendly and understanding attitude toward motion pictures exists in Santa Ana.

Home Brewed Movies

Favorite movies shown in the home or home-brewed movies of domestic or local scenes, are within the possibilities of the immediate future. Harry Levey, New York producer of educational and industrial motion pictures, has announced the perfection of a "movie disk" which will bring the moving picture into the home just as the phonograph disk brings grand opera and monologue.

Mental Wanderlust

"Mental wanderlust" is sometimes more damaging than the physical variety. Especially in the scenario writing game!

Oliver Morosco, now filming "The Half Breed," for First National, recently received a scenario from "north of the circle." Eagerly he tore open the envelope, and found—a story based on life in Ecuador!

The writer was afflicted with "mental wanderlust"—had wandered away from an attractive locale, with which he is thoroughly familiar, to dabble in a story of the distant tropics, which he has probably never seen.

One can't imagine the owner of a rich Alaskan gold mine abandoning his workings to experiment with a coffee plantation south of the equator, but, from a literary standpoint, that is exactly what this author had done.

The Palmer students of San Francisco and vicinity are invited to attend an organization meeting of a new Palmer Club, which will take place at Hotel Van Dorn, at 242 Turk Street, at 7:30 p. m., June 15th, 1921. The meeting will be presided over by M. S. Yerkovitch. Cloud C. Suggs, who is stopping at the American Hotel, will also address the students.

Directors Snubbed

Motion picture directors are going to be conspicuous by their absence in a new film production that is about to be launched in Los Angeles. Francis Ely Paget, noted screen writer who was formerly on Benjamin B. Hampton's author staff, is head of the new producing project and is author of the story and continuity of the initial production.

The players will study the script carefully, in full, not only their own parts, but those of the others of the cast, so they may know their own relation to the whole. In the old method, the director, as a sort of teacher lecturing through a megaphone, hurriedly "crams" the players just before each scene and during the action. Entrances, exits and other action mechanics hitherto in charge of directors consulting with cameramen, will be handled by the latter.

The author takes over the director's typically editorial or critical function over every department. This arrangement, Paget believes, will greatly improve the dramatic and artistic standard of motion pictures. He calls attention to the fact that some of the greatest dramatist—producers whose photoplays have made huge successes, call themselves directors, but operate on exactly the same plan.

Rex Beach Promoted

Forsaking magazine work and novels, Rex Beach is to devote his literary endeavors exclusively to the writing of scenarios for the United Artists' Pictures corporation. That the famous writer is to provide film plays for Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin is considered probable, as Hiram Abrams, president of the United Artists, exhibited the contract when discussing matters with this trio of movie stars.

The Editor of the Photodramatist would like to receive the name, address and photograph of every writer of screen plays, regardless of whether he or she is a free lance or connected with a studio—together with a brief biographical sketch. We would like to have in our library a record of every person who has written and sold one or more photoplays, and would like to publish, from time to time, little human interest sketches of these dreamers and doers. We would also like to know, in each case, just how the writer had approached the photodramatist's art: whether through the Palmer Plan, or sheer native insight and perception—or from the ranks of our playwrights and novelists.

The Spoken Cinema

The spoken cinema has been ushered in on the heels of the movies.

Talking motion pictures were tried for the first time successfully during the last week in New York with D. W. Griffith's latest masterpiece, "Dream Street," which has been declared his greatest screen play from the standpoint of psychic and dramatic power. Spoken words kept pace with the film. Not all the film was vocalized, but the principal scenes were. The invention is the work of a San Francisco man, Orlando E. Kellum.

According to New York reviewers the dream of despairing inventors, motion pictures that talk, seems to have been realized at last. And the figures on the screen talk, or sing, with such perfection of synchronization—governed by a mechanical device under which the dual record, visual and auditory, is both made and projected—that they seem to live and to enter into a personal relation with their audience.

Has Not Left Us Flat

When Julia Crawford Ivers, scenario writer for William D. Taylor, went to London for a vacation, rumors were flying around that she might possibly remain there to write for Famous Players-Lasky's London Studio. Miss Ivers has, however, only been "vacationing" and will return to Los Angeles the first of August to write the script for Mr. Taylor's next picture.



Although only a newly established resident in the os Angeles film colony, Josephine Quirk already has the scenarios for three big productions listed to her credit and is the recipient of many requests for her future services.

Formerly a newspaper woman and fiction writer, Miss Quirk left an important post in the Famous Players-Lasky publicity department in New York to prepare the script for "The Deluge" at the Goldwyn West Coast Studios.

Upon completing it, she joined the staff at the Louis B. Mayer Studios to scenarioize "The Price of Happiness," a First National attraction, in which Anita Stewart is starred. Her latest accomplishment is "A Question of Honor," which Edwin Carewe is now filming, with Miss Stewart as the star.

The Son-of-a-Gun!

Denison Clift, a contributor to the educational department of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, is attaining a wide measure of fame throughout Great Britain. Starting in this country as a free-lance photodramatist, he later became scenario editor for the Fox Film Corporation, and finally a full-fledged motion picture producer, directing his own productions. Recently he left for England, where he organized his own producing organization and immediately proceeded to make two photoplays, "Demos" and "The Diamond Necklace," both of which have caused a deep ripple throughout Europe. Both photoplays will probably be seen in the United States this fall.

The Nobility At It

Eugene Louise, la Marquise de Dumas, is writing photoplays in London. She is an American girl, widow of a descendant of the immortal author, and is now continental representative of the Palmer Photoplay corporation. It appears that screen writing is now "the thing" in the British smart set.

H. Thompson Rich, globe-trotter, magazine writer and scenarioist, has purchased a home in Hollywood and has concluded to make the Golden state his headquarters from now on.

William E. Wing, veteran motion picture scenario editor and writer, will be personally associated with Frederick Palmer in the educational department of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, according to recent announcement. His work in the Palmer institution will be as critic of original photoplays.

The Glad Tidings

Lois Weber has posted the following notice in her studios here, "Speed up! It's not the hard times coming, but the soft times going."

Which would be an excellent placard to post in any plant or establishment.

It told those who studied the matter and probed it to the bottom, not that people were ceasing to demand pictures, but that they were demanding better pictures.

Having arrived at a definite program, production is resumed—by actual count fifty-eight studios are operating at this writing in Los Angeles and this figure covers only recognized studios. At the larger studios anywhere from two to nearly a dozen separate companies are making pictures; some one hundred and fifty companies in all being busy and another fifty or so resting between pictures.

A count shows twenty-two companies just starting on productions and a score just getting under way.

A few of the noteworthy productions being made are "Without Benefit of Clergy" in the Brunton studio; "My Lady Friend," (De Havens); "The Three Musketeers" (Douglas Fairbanks); "The Grim Comedian" (Goldwyn); "The Great Impersonation" and "The Lady and the Laurels" (Lasky); "The Price of Happiness" (Louis B. Mayer); "Camille" and "The Conquering Power" (Metro); "Little Lord Fauntleroy" (Mary Pickford); "The Barnstormer" (Chas. Ray); "Everything for Sale" (Realart); "Foolish Wives" (Stroheim-Universal); "Fanny Herself," "My Lady of the Island," etc. (Universal); "The Law Comes to Singing River" (Fox); "Son of Wallingford," "The Desert Dream" (Vitagraph); "Rip Van Winkle" (Thos. Jefferson, Jr.-Lascelle); "Face of the World" (Willat), and many others equally important.



George Bernard Shaw

Cinema Protagonist

While George Bernard Shaw has not yet joined with Arnold Bennett, H. G. Wells, Sir James M. Barrie, Sir Gilbert Parker and other British men of letters in writing original photoplays, his attitude toward pictures is by no means hostile.

Much of the objection to films, he thinks, is by persons who condemn without seeing the pictures they object to.

"I am glad that the police have at last testified to the civilizing influence of pictures," says Shaw. "I was once invited to a conference of eminent persons, including the master of a famous public school, for the purpose of checking the alleged pernicious effects of the cinema on the youth of the country. I heard the eminent persons speak with sincere horror of the immoralities of the picture theater.

"I asked where the immoral films were to be seen, as I had visited cinemas in many European countries and had found their morals oppressively conventional, as might be expected from entertainments which have to be presentable to audiences of all classes and races, appearing simultaneously in cathedral towns and Chinese seaports, model villages and urban east ends.

"The eminent persons were unspeakably shocked at my assuming that they had actually seen what they were denouncing, or that they had ever been in a picture palace in their lives. Besides myself there was only one man present who spoke from personal experience of the pictures; and he was the master of a school for defective children in a very poor neighborhood. He testified eloquently to the value of the picture palaces as a refuge from the streets for children who had to be locked out while their mothers were out working.

"What other chance have such children of seeing well dressed people in handsome houses, behaving themselves courteously? If it makes them discontented with squalor and poverty and savage manners, so much the better.

"Such restlessness is far more hopeful socially than gambling, cruelty to animals and theft, which are the alternative excitements offered by the pious people who would have them banished from the movies."



LIVES there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said:
I can write a photoplay?



CAROL KAPLEAU, twenty-three-year-old photodramatist, has made over $27,000 in the past fifteen months from the sale of original photoplays from her pen. She recently celebrated the sale of an original to J. Parker Read, Jr., by bobbing her hair. She now looks like a real genius. She does not believe her strength as a writer will ebb; she does not anticipate an experience similar to Samson's.



WHERE are all the schools of photoplay writing which sprang up, mushroom-like, about three years ago? Why has Palmer no competition?

Photoplays in Review

By the Accomplices

"SOWING THE WIND"

Reviewed by Samuel H. Williams

(From the play by Sydney Grundy, directed by John Stahl, featuring Anita Stewart.)

Several seeds are blown away in this stupendous drama—of wind.

Anita Stewart, in the role of a rich little convent girl, returns unexpectedly to the jazzbo gambling house of BABY BRABANT, a one-time famous actress and her own mother, who is the shoulder-shakingest baby among a poor support of white-haired young men and snappy young women—all over forty and all drinking stage champagne from a collection of chipped whiskey glasses!

Anita is not up on the way people do things, now-a-days, having just returned from convent, and everything, so her ma sends her up stairs. Nevertheless, Anita appears shortly in one of her ma's evening frocks and makes a most undramatic entrance down the grand staircase, in true she-Chesterfieldian style. Ma is all put out at this, but is obliged to protect her offspring from the Tarzans who flock around and try to bite Anita with their false teeth.

Now the scene changes, for no apparent reason, and one sees a seedy country estate where an old man awaits the coming of his adopted son. Sonny Boy enters and right here he is interrupted by a flash-back which shows us that Anita doesn't know who her own mother is! Sonny Boy enters again and this time is able to announce that he is going right back to the city. Papa thinks that Sonny Boy is going to the city so's to sow the wind and reap the sandstorm.

Another interruption to show us that Anita doesn't know who her own father is! Just the same she knows her ma is a naughty girl, so Anita goes out into the night all by herself with her patent leather suit case. Ma is so da gone mad at this that she goes to a hop joint—that looks like a Chinese laundry—and takes an opium pipe right up in her hand and lights it, just like that! Note: They call this set, "Dream Street," without apology. (Thank God for D. W. Griffith!)

Sonny Boy goes to the city and meets Anita en route. She has become, in a year's time (short time lapse) the world's most famous singer. Sonny Boy goes home and tells papa that he is going to marry an actress. Papa tells him he can't marry an actress. Sonny Boy says he is going to marry Anita, by George! Papa tells Sonny Boy that once upon a time he, himself, married a stage woman, and she up an' left him, cold. A male neighbor comes in and tells papa that a child was born of this union. This is the first time that papa ever heard of it! Question: How did the neighbor know about it? But then, —ah—let us see—where were we? Oh, yes. Now for the great mystery! Who is Anita's papa? Papa goes to the city and meets Anita. Papa returns home. Sonny Boy returns home. Sonny Boy goes back to the city. Papa goes to the city. He and Sonny Boy return home. They both go back to the city. (All this allows ma time in which to die in the hop joint.)

Fourth and last climax: Papa tells Sonny Boy not to marry an actress woman but to make a plaything of her and then cast her off! Sow 'er ta the wind, by the gods! (Business of trying to follow argument between Sonny Boy and papa set forth in twenty-six beautifully hand-lettered sub-titles, done in Old English.) Some wind!

Flash-back showing ma dead on the hop joint floor, and Anita trying to bend over her without laughing. Anyway, Sonny Boy will not make a plaything of Anita. No, sir! He gets a minister and takes him to her apartment. (Same set as Int. jazz palace, with staircase removed.) Papa comes to Anita's flat, and tells her he is her real honest-to-goodness papa. (Note: Novelty. Papa proves his identity without exhibition of heart-shaped birthmark on left shoulder.) Anita, upon learning who her papa is, walks to breakfast-nook and leans heavily but gracefully upon grand piano. Sonny Boy follows. Love scene. Mention of Blue Birds, Clouds Rolling By, and Dawn of Tomorrow, and so forth. And so the play is ended! Without a plot, without a theme. It's an ill wind that blows nobody good. Poor Anita is blow about thru five reels of the worst blaa in her otherwise interesting career. However, let us say, in all kindness to Anitat, in summing up "Sowing the Wind," the audience thoroughly enjoyed the play. In fact, a good laugh was had by all!

"THE HOME STRETCH"

(Original photoplay by Charles Belmont Davis, featuring Douglas MacLean. Directed by Jack Nelson.)

Hereis a story which proves that screen entertainment value will, almost alone, put over a highly successful picture. Although one easily guesses the ending of this story, at the opening, "The Home Stretch" carries one along on a splen-

did tide of humanism, thrills and humor, the story expanding and growing with smooth tempo until the very close.

Charles Belmont Davis wrote this story for the screen. The result has proven once more that original photoplays are best fitted as true screen vehicles.

While this is a story that you can "guess," one is eager to follow its delightful twists and turns, and the exciting episodes so carefully relieved by true comedy. In addition there are touches of pleasing romance, added in careful ratio to the whole, successful screen success.

And, the conclusion is the kind desired, although this is put over with a touch of novelty.

"The Home Stretch" has provided Douglas MacLean with a story which, many will maintain, is proving the best of the series in which that star has appeared.

Synopsis. The story opens at a race-track, where Douglass MacLean, owner of a horse which is winning a race that will net him a fortune, deliberately ruins his horse's chance by running out in front of him to rescue a little child which had run out on the turf. This opening scene establishes a sympathetic attitude toward the hero, of course.

The child's dad has occasion to remember the courageous deed when he offers the racing man a job as clerk in his hotel. Just before this the hero had been forced to leave town because of an assault in a roadhouse. The hero accepts the hotel man's offer, and while working there has an encounter with an arbitrarily introduced villain of the lounge lizard species. He is again in bad repute, and he resigns rather than see his employer lose patronage. He then secures a job as man of all work around the town's general store, wherein is ensconced the post-office and a very pretty postmistress.

Quite a romance develops, and the climax is approached with the announcement of a horse-race at the annual County Fair. The hero learns that a "ringer" is going to run under the auspices of the loung lizard, and immediately he seeks his own horse and jockey and enters them —camouflaged—in the County Handicap against the villain's "ringer." The hero's great thoroughbred wins, but in the grandstand the postmistress and her father have listened to information highly discreditable to the hero. Broken hearted he departs, but later, having wiped his slate clean and made some money besides, he returns—and returns in a truly poetic and romantic manner, diving off a boat to swim to the home of his little postmistress sweetheart.

"SEE MY LAWYER"

(Scenario by W. Scott Darling, from the play by Max Marcin.)

A double tragedy has occurred here. Not only does the big stage success fail on the screen once more—at great expense—but an unbelievably poor arrangement of continuity has killed whatever natural opportunities for fun-making existed in the original sketch.

"See My Lawyer" is a stage farce which truly falls under the heading of "sparkling." The humor and satire are spontaneous and infectious. How it failed to "infect" the adapter is quite beyond solution. With a scattering of laughs, conveniently placed before him in the original, the Christie writer has ignored them with the remarkable result of three almost deadly-dull reels of matter before any semblance of sparkle makes itself felt.

It is evident that Director Al E. Christie, discovering from his daily runs that something was radically wrong with his writer's adaptation, was forced to interpolate what is called sure-fire "stock" stuff for the lead, who then proceeded to use these familiar but effective tools for a few smiles.

Even if an adapter lacked so painfully in originality as appears in this case, the primary foundation of mechanical photoplay writing should have evolved a better continuity. And how a former Palmer student who, supposedly, gave time and attention to preparing for his life's work, should have missed out so entirely, hardly can be understood.

W. Scott Darling is credited with this adaptation, which fails entirely as a humorous picture, but is notable for its misses, length and dull complications.

Again we have the example of the stage play, purchased for a large sum, when many adequate originals, written for the screen, could have been secured for the small fortune expended—it seems —"because it was a stage play."

Laurence Reid's synopsis in the Motion Picture News is lucid and comprehensive, and bears out the reviewer's critique. He says:

"The picture revolving around a get-rick-quick scheme, the steady patron will realize its single-track development because of repetitious detail. A youthful promoter things he has discovered a process for making artificial rubber. He is flooding the mails with literature concerning its merits and inviting the gullible public to become stockholders when a rival concern requests the government to investigate. Before the postal authorities take a hand the comedy becomes rather wearisome because it is lacking in spontaneity and humor. The characters are firmly planted and the plot is exposed with all its shortcomings intact. The promoter and his lawyer realizing that they are in "dutch" with the government feign insanity. Here is where T. Roy Barnes comes to the rescue and saves the picture with some stock "business." Here is where the comedy catches up with the spirit of the plot for the first time. A rich uncle has invested a small fortune and the promoters have a rich sum in their possession.

"The conflict enters on a battle of wits between them and the postal authority. An attempt to make it ring true is observed in the gullibility of the promoter in falling for such a scheme and the rival concern being hoodwinked by the inventor and his crude machine. However, Barnes scores with his insanity hokum. An alienist is called in and advises the asylum until he is influenced with a fat bribe. The heroine discovers her fiance's predicament. And so it develops into a counterplay with the hero attempting to get away with his hokum. In the end he succeeds by involving his rival and the government. The picture being devoid of humor and spontaneity never reaches farcical pretentions."

Questions Answered

Concerning the Writing of Photoplays

Q.—I worked and worked and worked on my last story, but still I am not satisfied. Can you suggest anything I can read that will help me?—R. W. P.

A.—I could suggest many books that might help you, but from your question I think you need especially to help yourself. You have worked and worked and worked. Good! But have you played? You are writing photo*plays,* remember, with the emphasis upon the *play.* Play with your characters, play with your plot, play upon your readers and your audience. Try to tell your story with the same enjoyment and delight as a child tells a fairy tale. Your work will be a lot better if you enjoy it, and your enjoyment will repay you for all the work you put in. A successful photoplaywright said yesterday, "I don't care if I never sell that story (one he had just finished). I had so much fun writing it that I am well repaid already." That is the spirit that creates plays. This does not mean that you don't have to work. You do. But get some fun out of it and you will put life into it.

Q.—How does the censorship agitation directly affect the photoplaywright? What shall we avoid in the way of subjects?—Miss R. S.

A.—The producers are trying to avoid everything that will give a potential censor a shock, in order to help kill the agitation. The photoplaywright must do the same. Avoid everything *unclean.* Write nothing that a child can't see, and you will be safe. On the other hand, don't let censorship frighten you. Write of life as you see it, but see it clearly, wholely and wholesomely. No one but an utter prude would censor the Chinatown scenes of "The Miracle Man;" they were necessary to a clear and whole presentation of that phase of life.

Q.—I see many pictures in which the unities of time and place are violated. Is it really necessary to preserve these unities?—Jean R.

A.—If a story is great enough it can violate all of the rules and still be good. But great stories seldom violate the rules; inferior stories do. Unity of time and place are not essential if the story is in other respects sufficiently unified—in idea, in action, in character development. But time and place unity is desirable because stories which are so unified are less difficult to produce. And almost always a really dramatic story can be so unified.

Q.—Why do the producers place the taboo on capital and labor stories? This subject is timely and important, it seems to me.—J. W. G.

A.—Capital and labor stories are not usually in demand because most stories that deal with this subject are more correctly treatises than entertaining, human dramas. There is no real objection to the capital labor conflict as a background of a photoplay, providing the play itself deals with human characters and is dramatic and entertaining. Most writers who select this subject do not create drama because they are interested in the *general* conflict. Drama is always a presentation of a *particular* conflict. The best way to suggest the general is to deal in definite, human particulars.

Q.—I have been reading the magazines and studying fiction from the photoplay standpoint, trying to decide whether a short story or serial I have read would make a good photoplay. Is this a worthwhile study?—H. C. S.

A.—Decidedly. It will aid you in becoming more familiar with plots, situations and characterization. Besides, you will acquire a real knowledge of the screen's requirements by comparison. In addition, I would suggest that you read the published plays of Pinero, Henry Arthur Jones, and Barrie, and study them from the same point of view. Make this study a form of relaxation, not a difficult task. Enjoy it.



YOU love the boy reading in a book, gazing at a drawing or cast; yet what are these millions who read and behold but incipient writers and sculptors? Add a little more of that quality which now reads and sees, and they will seize the pen or chisel.—*Emerson.*



EVERY great soul of man has had its vision and pondered it, until the passion to make the dream come true had dominated his life.—*Orison Swett Marden.*

Poems with Themes

Selected by Ted LeBerthon

AMERICANS

Americans
Of shaven, handsome visage,
Of pompous, cautious eloquence,
Forget your jaws,
Your safety razors,
The morning's business puzzle.
Bite foolish wind,
Nurse fairy blisters,
Cough doom and roman candles.
Take her,
Your rich, expensive Dorothy,
Not to the tabernacle,
Nor to the Midnight Giddies;
Wield all of her:
Petticoats, chaste legs, stilted soul,
Across your knees
And spank her humorously.
Tell her that virgins should not aggravate
By hiding beneath dignity and silks
Fair blood and gentle bosom.
Proud American womanhood should smart
To furnish wild, sweet wenches.
Firmly, strip her of her poise and underwear,
Ply oft and hard your manly palm
Against her soft, pink places;
Thus break tomorrow's haughty neck
On yesterday's grim altar.

Lawrence Vail
—The Dial.

VAIN GRATUITIES

Never was there a man much uglier
In the eyes of other women, or more grim:
"The Lord has filled her chalice to the brim,
So let us pray she's a philosopher,"
They said; and there was more they said of her—
Deeming it, after twenty years with him,
No wonder that she kept her figure slim
And always made you think of lavender.
But she, demure as ever, and as fair,
Almost, as they remembered her before
She found him, would have laughed had she been there;
And all they said would have been heard no more
Than foam that washes on an island shore
Where there are none to listen or to care.

Edwin Arlington Robinson
—The New Republic.

I SHALL LOVE YOU

I shall love you when you have learned to weep;
When sorrow, washing from your happy eyes
The mists of ignorance, the stains of sleep,
Shall leave you standing generous and wise
To brood upon the treason of the years,
The lure, the brevity, the certain ache
Of the world's fragile offerings. Such tears
As I or any man shall bring you—take.
For having known and suffered, you will hold
All lovely things more dear because they move
In fugitive battalions manifold;
And you will love men with a fiercer love,
As if this very night the seas should rise
And, billowing madly, burst apart the skies!

Joseph Freeman
—The Liberator.

TODAY

Look to this day;
For it is Life—
the very Life of Life.
In its brief course lie all the verities
And realities of our existence.

—

The bliss of growth,
The glory of action,
The splendor of beauty;

—

For yesterday is only a dream
And tomorrow is only a vision.

—

But today well lived makes every
Yesterday a dream of Happiness,
And every tomorrow a vision of Hope.

—

Look well, therefore, to this day.
Such is
The Salutation of the Dawn!

—From the Sanskrit.

Editor's Note: Each month The Photodramatist will print a number of poems, selected from contemporaries and at random, which not only represent the very best published verse, but contain themes which may inspire a reader to the writing of a photoplay. These poems are, after all, reflections of current thought.



Hints from the Studios

By William E. Wing

DO you prefer piercing the bullseye to aiming at the moon—or perhaps you prefer the "stars" as a target? Some screen scribblers are one-pointed in their art; they write one certain type of story, seldom even varying locale. Others reach hither and thither in the ether for their themes, characters and plots. Yours truly is fussing around the studios a good part of the time, with eyes wide open and ears pricked. Very often a scenario editor will mention that this or that star or director is on the trail of a yarn about the sea, or the west, or the Orient, or Russia, or some other place. Here are the latest hints:

Western—Male lead, with ingenue type of leading woman. Preferably story based upon vital theme. Should have big situation, approached through proper tempo to powerful climax and happy conclusion. Does not want antiquated danger situations pieced together until the handsome hero performs a rescue. Metropolitan scenes may be included in opening story, but the story should move along to the west and remain there. The girl of the plot does not necessarily have to be a western girl.

Two-reel westerns are also in demand, but the stories must be convincing and consequential. Basing westerns upon crime is rather taboo. This hint applies to all other forms of the photoplay.

Ingenue Comedy Dramas—An unusual characterization, or a "dierent" story, wanted. Do not stick too closely to old formulas.

A few suggestions: little Irish girl fisherman's daughter; mountain girl; waif;—elderly comedy fathers in vogue.

Unique Two-Reeler—With the two-reel market opening wide, there should be a real opportunity for stories in which the action takes place within a few hours. One of the studio editors is very strong for Swinnerton's "Nocturne." I'd advise all photodramatists contemplating writing two-reel photoplays to read this novel.

Sea Stories—One produced is very strong for a South Sea Island story with a strong male lead; would consider South America or coast of Africa. Present-day popularity of London, Conrad and McFee among fiction readers would indicate early filming of many sea stories written originally for the screen—as there are very few of the famous authors' works which are adaptable. All-boat stories are generally taboo. Comedy character suggested to lighten story; most fiction stories too morbidly tragic.

Canadian Woods Drama — A summer story wanted, sans blizzards, snowshoes and dog sleds; mounted police, post; official guides and other personnel o. k. However, believes stories making Royal Northwest Mounted Policeman a lead are too prevalent —in fact, overworked. King Vidor's "Sky Pilot" a good model.

Special Demands—A really big thought or problem, but no faith healing, sociological problem, sans didactics, with undercurrent of pathos. Society drama, with "mental" punch and suspense; too little action in handicapping present offerings along this line; more force is needed—less daintiness. Feminine star would like to do modern Italian character.

General Remarks—Studios want powerful stories which do not involve heavy production expense. Unless your story is unusual in character and strength, it will not be accepted if it entails a great production cost. Avoid as much as possible far journeys, allegory which demands special costuming, sets, etc., and scenes demanding swarms of "extras."

Southern California studios are far from rivers, big lakes, waterfalls, etc. The law forbids the staging of forest fires in the mountains. Cattle stampedes can no longer be employed. Dance halls, old-time western saloons, and plots based on operations of banditry and "killers"—all are taboo at present. However, the boundaries of melodrama must not be drawn too closely, when legitimate situations call for vivid action. The rule might read: thrills without kills.

Pictorial Values—California's beautiful natural scenery, and its homes with their sunken gardens and other achievements in landscape gardening, offer countless opportunities for poetic pictorial touches.

There are canyons, mountain camps, country clubs, big trees, valleys, and the great Pacific. Ocean scenic effects run the gamut from resorts and pleasant bays to wild, picturesque inlets, with breakers dashing against huge promontories or swirling into mysterious grottos.

The magnificent grounds of several internationally famous hostelries, located in California, provide scope for groupings of lawn fetes, cozy arbor confabs, golf link scenes, and polo courses.

All wild scenery poetizes and vitalizes a photoplay. Artistic landscape gardening effects lend a rare patrician touch—where necessary. All nature has a tonic quality which invigorates, and more or less grandeur which sublimates; the photodramatist should harness natural forces, and work for an economy of expensive stage settings.

The Photoplay Market

Supplied exclusively to The Photodramatist by the Sales Department of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation.

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Owing to the frequent changes in studio personnel, no addresses of the stars are given herewith. Full information may be obtained by addressing Photoplay Sales Department, Palmer Photoplay Corporation, Los Angeles, California.

This agency, being in close daily contact with studios and market conditions, is equipped to obtain quicker and more satisfactory results than the free-lance photodramatist can obtain for himself. Long experience has proved the superiority of the reliable marketing bureau. Furthermore, it will be found that some of the producing organizations do not maintain reading staffs, and will return manuscripts unread. They do, however, in almost every instance, consider manuscripts submitted to them by recognized agencies, for they know that such scripts have had a careful reading, possibly a revision, and are of a type suited to their requirements.

FIVE-REEL DRAMA —FEMALE LEAD

May Allison
Theda Bara
Betty Blythe
Alice Brady
Alice Calhoun
Catherine Calvert
Ora Carew
Irene Castle
Helen Chadwick
Mildred Harris Chaplin
Naomi Childers
Ethel Clayton
Betty Compson
Viola Dana
Marion Davies
Priscilla Dean
Eleanor Faire
Elsie Ferguson
Pauline Frederick
Lillian Gish
Corinne Griffith
Vera Gordon
Edith Hallor
Elaine Hammerstein
Juanita Hansen
Wanda Hawley
Alice Joyce
Alice Lake
Florence Lawrence
Louise Lovely
Katherine MacDonald
Vivian Martin
Mae Marsh
May McAvoy
Mary Miles Minter
Carmel Myers
Alla Nazimova
Eva Novak
Jean Paige
Eileen Percy
Mary Pickford
Dorothy Phillips
Ruby de Remer
Florence Reed
Irene Rich
Edith Roberts
Ruth Roland
Teddy Sampson
Gloria Swanson
Mabel Julienne Scott
Eileen Sedgwick
Anita Stewart
Blanche Sweet
Norma Talmadge
Rosemary Theby
Florence Vidor
Gladys Walton
Lois Weber
Pearl White
Clara Kimball Young

FIVE-REEL DRAMA —MALE LEAD

John Barrymore
Lionel Barrymore
Hobart Bosworth
William Desmond
Elliott Dexter
William Farnum
Sessue Hayakawa
Gareth Hughes
Lloyd Hughes
Thomas Jefferson
J. Warren Kerrigan
James Kirkwood
Montague Love
Bert Lytell
Frank Mayo
Thomas Meighan
Owen Moore
Tom Moore
Antonio Moreno
Harry Myers
Eugene O'Brien
Tyrone Power
Joe Rahn
Charles Ray
William Russell
Joe Ryan
Milton Sills
Conway Tearle
H. B. Warner

FIVE-REEL COMEDY-DRAMA —FEMALE LEAD

May Allison
Billie Burke
June Caprice
Marguerite Clark
Viola Dana
Bebe Daniels
Dorothy Gish
Wanda Hawley
Justine Johnson
Mollie King
Doris May
Mary Miles Minter
Mary Pickford
Constance Talmadge

FIVE-REEL COMEDY-DRAMA —MALE LEAD

Roscoe Arbuckle
Douglas Fairbanks
Carter de Haven
Johnny Jones
Douglas MacLean
Tom Moore
Charles Ray
Wallace Reid
Bryant Washburn

FIVE-REEL COMEDY

Charlie Chaplin
Max Linder
Charles Murray
Kala Pasha
Ben Turpin

FIVE-REEL WESTERN

Art Acord
Harry Carey
Lester Cuneo
William Duncan
Jack Drum
Ray Gallagher
Neal Hart
Jack Hoxie
Tom Mix
Pete Morrison
Antonio Moreno
Will Rogers
Tom Santchi
Russell Simpson

THREE-REEL COMEDY

Harold Lloyd

TWO-REEL COMEDY —FEMALE LEAD

Vioria Daniel
Dorothy Devore
Louise Fazenda
Phyllis Haver
Irene Hunt
Pearl Shepard
Edna Shipman

TWO-REEL COMEDY —MALE LEAD

Jimmie Adamas
Alexander Alt
Jimmy Aubrey
Monty Banks
George Bunny
Charlie Chaplin
Chester Conklin
Clyde Cook
Bud Duncan
Neely Edwards
Harry Gribbon
Lloyd Hamilton
Ham Hamilton
Buster Keaton
Jack Livingston
Harold Lloyd
Hank Mann
Harry McCoy
Lee Moran
Charles Murray
Kala Pasha
Larry Semon
Sid Smith
Ford Sterling
Harry Swett
Ben Turpin
Bobbie Vernon
Jack White
Leo White

TWO-REEL WESTERN —FEMALE LEAD

Josephine Hill
Helen Holmes
Fritzie Ridgway

TWO-REEL WESTERN —MALE LEAD

Art Acord
F. Braidwood
William Fairbanks
C. E. Hatton
J. B. Warner

ONE-REEL COMEDY

Ida Allen
Eddie Boland
Billy Fletcher
Gaylord Lloyd
Harry Mann
George Ovey
Snub Pollard
Harry Pollard
Rex Story

SERIAL

Ann Little
Ruth Roland
Antonio Moreno
Eddie Polo
William Russell



"Why, *I* could write a better story than that!"

Thousands say that, just as *you* have said it dozens of times

Perhaps you could

THE motion picture industry extends a genuine welcome to you to *try;* and offers you fame and fortune if you succeed.

The industry faces the most serious shortage of photoplays in its history. It needs, and will liberally pay for, 2,000 good scenarios. Not mere ideas, not patchworks of incident and action, but connected, workable stories for the screen. It is because the studios cannot obtain sufficient good material that so many thousands of patrons are criticising so many of the pictures shown.

And it may be that you, who can tell a good from a bad picture, can help.

"But," you say, "I am not a writer. I am only a housewife—or a salesman"—or whatever you are.

C. Gardner Sullivan, who started life as a farmer boy, might have looked at it that way, too. But he didn't. He tried; and now his income is $2,000 a week. He was not a "born" writer. But he discovered that he had creative imagination, a sense of dramatic values. The rest was a simple matter of training.

A nation-wide search for story-telling ability

Here and there among the millions of men and women who attend the picture shows the essential talent for photoplay writing exists. And the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, with the co-operation of leading motion picture producers, has undertaken to locate it. By means of a novel and intensely interesting questionnaire, prepared by expert scenario writers, it is able to detect the latent ability in any person who will seriously apply the test. If the subject interests you, you are invited to avail of this free examination.

The Palmer Photopay Corporation is primarily an agency for the sale of photoplays to producers. Its Department of Education is a training school for scenario writers—a school that selects its students through the test applied by this questionnaire. Unless new writers are trained there will be no scenarios for us to sell, nor plays for the studios to produce.

In the three years of its existence the Palmer Corporation has trained many scenario writers and sold many of their photoplays. You have sat spellbound in your theatre and witnessed the work of Palmer students which was written in farm houses, city flats, and mining camps.

And the same studios that produced and paid for those pictures have rejected scenarios submitted by novelists and magazine writers whose names are known wherever the language is spoken.

The acquired art of fine writing cannot be transferred to the screen. But the native gifts, creative imagination and dramatic instinct—which means vivid story telling—are the life and the soul of the motion picture industry. Trained to express themselves in the language of the screen, these gifts are priceless to their possessor.

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It is a simple test which you can apply to yourself in your own home.

YOU ARE INVITED TO APPLY OUR TEST TO YOURSELF

We will gladly send you the Palmer questionnaire upon request. Answer, to the best of your ability, the questions in it, and we will tell you frankly what the record reveals to us.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation cannot endow you nor any other person with creative imagination; it cannot impart dramatic insight. But if you have a natural inclination toward these essential elements of photoplay writing, it can be discovered through the questionnaire; and through the Course and Service your talent can be trained in the technique of scenario writing. And it can be done by home study at low cost.

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Please send me, without cost or obligation on my part, your questionnaire. I will answer the questions in it and return it to you for analysis. If I pass the test, I am to receive further information about your Course and Service.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....



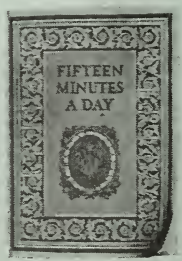
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JULY 1921
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for August

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The story of how three "students" of photoplay writing won five thousand dollars!



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II WIN A CASH PRIZE IN THE CONTEST OUTLINED ON PAGE 24—

III Send us some good verse—We will pay for accepted poems!

IV Notify us of that change in address—

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of the Author's League of America

The PHOTODRAMATIST

Your Summer Vacation

By Frederick Palmer

"With fierce noons beaming, moons of glory gleaming,
Full conduits streaming, where fair bathers lie,
With sunsets splendid, when the strong day, ended,
Melts into peace, like a tired lover's sigh—
So cometh summer nigh."
—*Edwin Arnold.*

THE season of Romance is here—Summertime, that hiatus, that breathing spell for some; that interminable round of days on scorched plains beneath brassy skies for others; a season when the night is lambent with broadest moons for all.

In America, summertime is synonymous with vacation time. Many of those who aspire to write for the luminous square are, through circumstances beyond their immediate control, obliged to devote many hours of their days to some pursuit not in the direction of their natural bent. To them, this two weeks' or two months' vacation is a glorious respite, when they can buckle down to creative expression with a clear, refreshed brain—free from the intruding army of heterogeneous thoughts indigenous to the temporary vocation.

For both the master and the tyro photodramatist there are the wholesome mountain resorts, the cooling waters of lakes, and the rejuvenating, rugged old ocean. But better yet, in all these places—in the summertime—boys and girls and men and women are realizing dreams; are living moments that will stand out, during the rest of their lives, as their mountain peaks and high water marks of joyous illusion.

Numerous are the romances at summer-resorts—begun on spacious hotel verandas or dusty mountain trails or pleasant beaches; and among these happy chapters of life are your characters—in their hopes and dreams your dramas.

What is Your Motive?

By Olga Printzlau

WOULD you write a photoplay for the sheer joy of expressing yourself, even if you knew there would be little likelihood of its being accepted?

If you would, you have gone far on the path to ultimate success, for it is this divine enthusiasm that begets talent and denotes the spark of genius. Few writers can succeed without this afflatus.

The one who grinds out a story for the sake of the dollars has but a slender chance of attaining those same dollars—and no one can be taught to write who does not love to write. Of course, one with the great desire for expression of the beauty, the equations of life, must study technique, for the spirit must be clothed to be comprehended by the physical senses—in any art expression.



Olga Printzlau is chief scenarist for William de Mille. She is of the very first rank of artistic photodramatists. She does not believe in writing for the box-office. Her article is in itself a creed worth adopting.

Study or training will never negatively influence a style, or an individuality in attaining certain effects.

I think there is a deeper law, rooted in metaphysics, that makes motive a determinant of success. Perhaps, as John Muir once remarked: "When a man has gold dust in his eyes, he can't see the flowers."

I once knew a woman who said to me, while she was harassed by unfavorable financial conditions: "If the worst comes to the worst, I think I shall try my hand at writing scenarios!" She probably thought she'd write two or three during the lunch hour! In her case, she looked on photoplay writing as an expedient, to be adopted in preference to working as a chambermaid.

In days gone by, I wonder if anyone ever said: "Now that the laundry business is going to the dogs, I shall have to follow in Beethoven's footsteps and compose a few symphonies?"

There is only one impulse that will ever create any work of art, and that is love. One need never write consciously for the box-office. If your photoplay strikes a responsive chord in human hearts, the box-office will come to you.



"WHILE we float here, far from that tributary stream on whose banks our friends and kindred dwell, our thoughts, like the stars, come out of their horizon still; for there circulates a finer blood than Lavoisier has discovered the laws of,—the blood, not of kindred merely, but of kindness, whose pulse still beats at any distance and forever. After years of vain familiarity, some distant gesture or unconscious behavior, which we remember, speaks to us with more emphasis than the wisest or kindest words. We are sometimes made aware of a kindness long passed, and realize that there have been times when our friends' thoughts of us were of so pure and lofty a character that they passed over us like the winds of heaven unnoticed; when they treated us not as what we were, but as what we aspired to be."—*Thoreau on "Friendship."*

Elinor Glyn's Great Moment

By Ted LeBerthon

"THE love dreams of a thousand years crowded into one ecstatic fragment of Time and prisoned in a strip of celluloid." The studio illuminati speak raptly of Elinor Glyn as the romantic poet of the screen. "The Great Moment" is esteemed one of the year's highest accomplishments. The great flaming moment itself is declared a master climax.

It is seldom given to any creative artist to triumph in more than one medium, yet this brilliant Englishwoman has evidently scored decisively with her first story written originally for the screen. I decided to hear from Mrs. Glyn's own lips an appraisal of "The Great Moment."

She greeted me, in the lobby of the Hollywood Hotel, with that charm and poise which distinguishes women who are students and interpreters of life. She is rather *petite* and it is not difficult to imagine the fragile, romantic miss of yesteryears. Her berylline eyes are scintillant, searching.

"I will not discuss the merits of 'The Great Moment,'" said the authoress, when we were seated. "Let the public do that. And if they are pleased, we must not overlook Mr. Sam Wood, with his sympathetic direction, the acting of Miss Swanson, the supporting players . . . . . at any rate, the great moment for me has already passed—you want to know when I experienced it? I'll tell you—

"My great moment came when Mr. Lasky quietly told me, in the projection room, as the final scenes of the picture flickered before us, that my photoplay—my first effort—was a splendid work."

Mrs. Glyn surprised me. I wondered—a great novelist—

"You know," she continued, "so many authors have returned to their first loves, the novel and the short story, after trying for a brief time to write photoplays. I was none too confident when I first arrived at the Famous Players-Lasky Studio, of my ability to write for the cinema. However, I've always had the pictorial sense, and now that I realize it I can say that this is the key to photoplay writing."

Elinor Glyn is heart and soul devoted to her new medium of expression, so much so that she has signed a contract to write a series of original photoplays for Gloria Swanson. I asked her if she believed other noted authors would continue to write for the screen.

"A few will," she replied. "You must understand that the novelist of long standing has many prejudices to overcome. Some look down upon the photoplay. Others are baffled by it. Many prefer a medium with which they are familiar to one they have to learn."

My next question drew a smile from her.

"No," she answered. "I am not at all certain that the young photodramatists who have 'nothing to unlearn' will write better screen plays than will accomplished literateurs. Always the one with the more highly developed pictorial sense will possess an advantage, but the mature novelist or playwright who grasps screen technique is apt to surpass the youngster, through a vaster knowledge of life. However, in another generation we will have our master photodramatists who will mean to the screen what Moliere has meant to the play or Balzac to literature. For the present, the new school has nothing to fret or worry over—the novelists are not crowding the field."

One point Mrs. Glynn is most emphatic upon.

"Stories written directly for the screen make far better motion productions than adaptations of books and plays, for many obvious reasons that almost everyone interested in the subject is cognizant of. I feel, too, that the public should be considered"—she laughed—"a few years ago in London I actually wept at a cinema distortion of a famous novel I'd always idealized. The hero was made fat and forty rather than romantic and thirty, and as for the heroine . . . . . ah, my girlhood heroine. . . . . .

"I shall never consent to the filming of any of my novels unless I am to be on the ground, to co-operate in the direction, assembling, and cutting of the cinema version. The public should be spared disillusion, dis-

appointment. I do not mean to be intellectually snobbish, to infer that no director can make a screen drama equal to the book. He might surpass it! But it can rarely ever be a faithful interpretation of the book—the director's viewpoints, his temperament, differ in many cases from the author's. No two people have the same mental image of any character or locale in a book. Misinterpretations and misconceptions are bound to be. Only with the author being on hand to guard against revisions and interpolations, and the introduction of false psychology, is it possible to film a novel—so that the public will see in the cinema the same meaning and intent as in the novel."

Elinor Glyn does not think it absolutely necessary for a screen writer to collaborate with a director. "You see," she says, "if the director misinterprets an 'original' no one is disappointed except the photodramatist. The public does not read the scenario, and therefore has no preconceived idea of the story or the characters."

An author should take more pride in his work than to allow a fiction masterpiece he's evolved to be filmed without his supervision, "unless,"—and Mrs. Glyn smiled as she said this—"he needs the money. And in that case . . . . well . . . . why not just offer to sell the story and withold one's name and the book's title ? That would show whether the producer was sincerely looking for a good story—the groundwork for a good photodrama—or just a celebrated name! The names of characters could be changed, and then the director could change the story to his heart's content without earning the displeasure of the reading public or the dismay of the author."

I hope to be able to review "The Great Moment" in time for publication in the August *Photodramatist.* I spoke to Mrs. Glyn of doing so, in taking leave of her. She said she might make arrangements for a preview for the local press.

That great public which always welcomes a new novel by Elinor Glyn will be pleased to know that she has not altogether deserted her first love and is, in fact, at present engaged in putting the finishing touches to a new romantic work—prior to starting on her next photoplay. To the young screen writer, though, it should be vastly encouraging to know that the great moment for the famous authoress came when her first photodrama was pronounced a success.



Sonnet

By Jose Rodriguez

When all the roses in the field are sere
And old in loveliness; when day grows dusk
And calling light away leaves desolate
The fair enamelled meadows of our cheer—

When softly drawing closer year by year
Death from afar comes silently with Fate,
Then sweetly let us close our book; sedate
And quietly greet him, without reproach or fear.

But when the river of a thousand turns
Achieves the last unfolding labyrinth—
Covering all the valleys and the bournes
With the vague fragrance of the curling ferns
And the white trumpets of the hyacinth,
We'll smile once more and give to him who yearns.



THE Prelude to the Deluge: the last two reels from "While New York Sleeps."

Girls, 1921 Model

By Bebe Daniels

WHY are so many writers—novelists, playwrights, photodramatists—apparently afraid of life? Or are they ignorant of life—have they allowed the caravan to pass by while they slept or averted the gaze?

Some day an author is going to set down in words Life "as is." He's going to reveal to us what we've known all along but never read about before. Today—and yesterday for that matter—how many writers have mirrored the facts of life in their true proportion? Have the incidents and episodes which most influenced our lives been touched upon—except lightly?

Every normal, fun-loving American miss has adventures and impulses that the writers of comedy drama consistently pass up. Is it because most of these writers are men who — because they are writers —know women but theoretically, really not half understanding them?

The American flapper is a wonderful phenomenon; she is more than curls and gingham or bobbed hair and rolled hose—she is a female d'Artagnan, an iconoclast, and a trail blazer, all in one!

In my last two photoplays I was happily cast in *real* roles, interpreting girls who acted in reel life as girls do in contemporary real life. One role was that of Teddy Simpson in "Ducks and Drakes." Teddy—a girl, thus the duckling appellation—was engaged to marry a man of the quiet, dependable sort who make good husbands and nurse maids but aren't very exciting . . . . a little slow, 'er—well, you know? Her cup of life was also woefully diluted with the vinegary philosophy of a prosy old aunt who understood modern girls about as much as a marsh hen understands a nightingale. Well, something had to bust—and it did. Of course, even so . . . .



The Irresistible Bebe, who is making cinema history at Realart with her vivid yet sparkling histrionism, offers writers some hints on "Girls."

Have you a little March hare in your home or among your acquaintances? I was a March hare in my last picture, and believe me, there was a real niece of your Uncle Samuel!—a girl who would try anything once, even to wagering that she could live in New York a whole week on seventy-five cents. Did she do it? Well!

There's a large opportunity looming for some photodramatist who knows how to write about the l'il flappers, with all their coquetry, wiles, superficialities—but with their inner sense of values, which—believe me!—they cleave to. It's that little touch of understanding of the real girl—the girl within—that will some day mark the difference between the great American "boy and girl" romance, and the rest of the stuff that's been written. Most writers of comedy drama make idiots of their ingenues—or at

best, dolls.

What with swimming, riding, rowing, hiking and other zestful pursuits, the coming American girl is not going to shunt golden glances from beneath velvet-lidded eyes at emaciated juveniles with wax mustachios; she's not going to be a clinging vine or an accessory, but a girl who makes adventures, who creates circumstances, and is—being herself a poem of America—capable of singing, with her brothers, Walt Whitman's "Song of the Open Road":

"Afoot and light hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.
Henceforth I ask not good fortune, I myself am good fortune!"



Wisdom for Writers

By the Sages

"ALL man's education, all his thoughts and sentiments, are really formed from pictures. Pictures are much more powerful than writing or speech. Everyone can see a picture, and interpret it in his way; it is as irresistible as example. The motion picture is life, magnified and extending over a limitless field; it is the accumulated example and experience of thirty men and thirty years of life, concentrated in a single moment. I repeat: all ideas of duty, justice, love, right and wrong, happiness, honor, luxury, beauty, all ideas concerning the goal of life which are now being formed in the minds of your children, are ideas implanted by the movies, and these same ideas will in turn produce the men who will be the America of tomorrow."

Maurice Maeterlinck.

"I FORESEE a new screen literature with as many styles and differentiations as the stage. We will have the lyric, the epic, the dramatic and other divisions and subdivisions in the films as behind the footlights. These established writers will not necessarily give their entire time to the screen, but they will know how to express themselves in the films. We will see playwrights turning out a number of original screen and stage plays each year, just as we now have them simultaneously producing magazine stories and novels or novels and dramas. I know the screen deserves—and needs—original stories created and devised for camera telling."

William de Mille.

"IN constructing plots, my first counsel is to build *up,* not *down!* Do not, under any circumstances, rely upon a picture's early situations to carry and sustain interest throughout the play.

"Arrange your sequences with strict attention to coherency and continuity of action, but strive to make each situation better, and stronger, than its predecessor—almost independent of its forerunner so far as quality and story-value are concerned. Many writers have fallen short of their mark because they opened their plot with a 'crash,' so to speak, and, depending on this intensity at the start, allowed interest to lag through failure to provide subsequent situations and climaxes of real dramatic merit. The successful photoplay is one that is well balanced throughout; always leading on and on, stimulating imagination and preparing for the ultimate finale which appeases and satisfies the expectant spectator."

Thos. H. Ince.

"I DOUBT if the great public wants realities. I think it resents having its illusions tampered with. It wants to go on thinking of life in gilded terms, utterly false on the face of them. The development of our nation has brought about a curious race psychology. We have evolved certain moral and mental barriers which we well-nigh guard with our lives. For instance, the public does not resent the suggestion of wrong in its stories; indeed, it even enjoys the possibility of evil, but, in the end, it must see that the wrong wasn't really there at all. Thus the mob conscience is satisfied."

Lionel Barrymore.



Study Your Audience!

By Harvey O'Higgins
World Famous Author and Playwright

STUDY your audiences. The highbrow has been studying them for you. And in his peculiar patter, the highbrow can tell you a lot.

Do you aspire to write comedy? Says the highbrow: "Laughter in an audience is the result of a conflict between an impulse to laugh and a resistance to the impulse."

For instance, take Charlie Chaplin. At his funniest moments, he is always meek, pathetic, put upon. He is so pitiable that you do not like to laugh at him. That is why you laugh so loudly. Your unwillingness to laugh dams up the impulse to laugh until the pressure becomes too great and the dam goes out with a roar. If you are going to write successful comedy you will have to plot your story in such a way that there will be a resistance to laughter in your audience, as well as an impulse to laugh. To get your big laugh, you will have to build a high dam. If you build it too high, the laughter will never come over it. If you build it too low, the audience's amusement will trickle away in a titter.

Says the highbrow: "The conflict that produces laughter is commonly a conflict between the conscious mind and the subconscious."

And here is where the highbrow can open your eyes widest. The subconscious mind is the mind that dreams while you sleep. It is the mind in which your animal instincts move. It is the primitive mind out of which conscious intelligence has developed. It is the mind of the instinctive emotions. And it is the mind to which every successful story and play and movie has to go to get the emotional pull that "puts it over." It is the artistic mind, as distinguished from the scientific mind. It is the lowbrow mind, not the highbrow. It is what we call "the heart," as contrasted with "the head."

Watch the audience before a successful and popular film. Watch yourself. Your intellect may be telling you that the picture is absurd, improbable, overdrawn, full of bunk. But you will be laughing, or weeping, or thrilling, in spite of yourself. Your subconscious mind has been reached, and you respond with ungovernable emotions, independent of your intelligence.

Says the highbrow: "Emotion is always instinctive emotion. There is no such thing as emotion of the intellect. Emotion is always purposeful to instinct. Emotion is the tension aroused by the desire to carry out an instinctive act, or the release of tension when the instinctive desire is satisfied."

So, to plot a successful film-story, you must chart it out according to the laws of instinctive emotion in the subconscious mind. That is what the great artists have always done, instinctively. The highbrow, studying the subconscious mind, has discovered these laws, intelligently. He can help you a lot.

He can help you most in the movies, because the subconscious mind thinks in pictures always, just as your dreams are always pictures. What the highbrow calls the "symbols" that explode your instinctive emotions—these symbols, too, are pictures, images, for the most part. The audience, watching a moving-picture, is absorbed in a sort of waking dream; and your hero and your heroine and your heavy and your comedian are all symbols that release instinctive emotions automatically. If you cross the currents of those emotions in laying out your plot, you will "lose" your audience.

Watch them. They will begin to cough, and shuffle, and scrape their feet. If you continue to frustrate their instinctive desire, they will sit cold and dejected. If you keep it up to your conclusion, no matter how brilliantly written and intelligently directed your picture is, the popular verdict will be "rotten," and not all the praise of the intelligent critics of the theatre will save your film from the can on the shelf.

The "Bump" for Drama

By Jeanie MacPherson

"HAVE you a 'bump for drama'?" That's the question every would-be scenario writer should ask himself. And not one out of a thousand does. That intangible, metaphysical thing that concentrates all of the emotions and situations of a story in the heart of a central character—that's drama. But, oh, how far the beginner misses that ideal!

I spent four hours with a young writer recently — and I told him at the end that I'd gladly trade him three of his gorgeous Hawaiian sunsets for one real situation! As a matter of fact, he did have a germ of an idea but it was so buried in the sunsets that he didn't know it was there.

A very large proportion of the people who send us scenarios are decidedly clever individuals. In their stories we find occasional dramatic situations of real merit, touches of clever psychology, deft character drawings, and colorful locales.

But the trouble is that the beginner becomes tangled up in the glories of "atmosphere" and forgets that it is the human struggle to survive and attain happiness which interests other humans. Cecil B. DeMille triumphed with "Joan, the Woman" because the play centered in the heart of a wonderful character. In "Male and Female" the changed situation of the butler on a desert isle gripped our attention. And so it goes. The young writer with thoughts of colorful sunsets in his mind goes away from one of these plays and says, "Why, I can beat that." For he has in his mind a bit of atmosphere or a tiny situation which to him seems to surpass the play he has just seen.

Isn't that a mistaken attitude? Instead of going to pick the "wrongs" why not try to find the "rights"? What is there in such a production that makes people willing to pay out their hard-earned money to see it; to be willing to stand in long box-office lines in anticipation of the pleasure that awaits within? Young scenario writers would do well to so study current successes. Intensive, unprejudiced analysis would help to develop their "bump of drama"; to distinguish in their minds the difference between the close-woven fabric of a well-knit story and the tangle of threads one finds in the usual combination of atmosphere and unrelated incident that finds its way into the hands of the scenario reader.



Jeanie MacPherson has written such outstanding photoplay successes as "Something to Think About," "Don't Change Your Husband," and "'Till I Come Back to You." She comes right to the point in this convincing article.

Newspaper reporters have a great advantage in developing a "bump for drama" because their work trains them to think tersely and to isolate real news—which is usually real drama. But while journalistic training is valuable it is not essential. Careful study of published novels, short stories and plays will help to develop a "bump for drama." If you intend to write for pictures most certainly you should be a constant photoplay-goer.

Good—But Not Good Enough

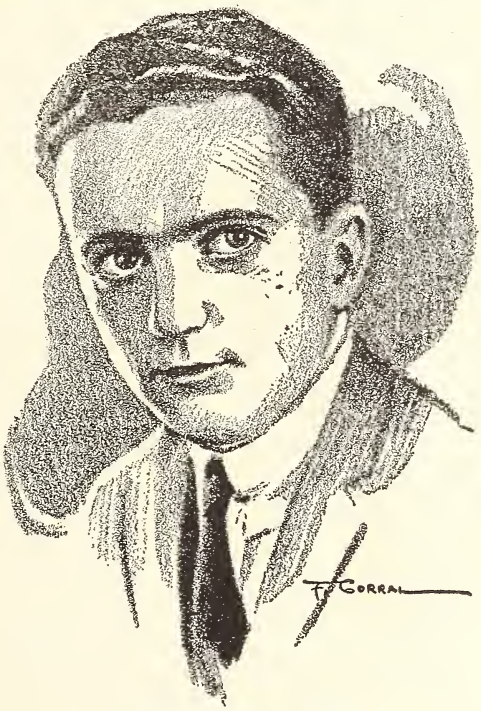
By J. Leo Meehan

A FEW days ago I received a letter from a young man down in Georgia, telling me that he has saved up several hundred dollars, and that he was planning to come to Los Angeles to break into the photoplay writing game. He expressed supreme confidence in his ability to do so, providing he had the opportunity. And he had come to the conclusion that being here on the ground would bring him the opportunity.

I replied, and with all the earnestness I could put into it, urged him to stay where he was while conducting his experiment. I knew he was flirting with a park bench and an empty stomach if he pursued the course he had mapped out. And it is a fact that one can become just as hungry in Los Angeles as in any other place. The climate is great, but it doesn't fill the stomach.

It is neither necessary nor advisable for the beginner to come here to Los Angeles to break in. He will have just as many rejections and just as hard a row to hoe within a stone's throw of the studios as he will a thousand miles away. And what is more to the point, I want to emphasize, if he can write real screen stories he can get them over from his home town as well as he can here.

I am convinced that many who are ambitious to become screen writers make two fundamental mistakes: they are not satisfied to "make haste slowly," and they are working on the assumption that they can make good simply because they can write scenarios that are "just as good" as many they see in their home town theaters.



STAY HOME, AND

"make haste slowly," says J. Leo Meehan in this fascinating article dealing with actualities. Mr. Meehan, a former Palmer student and erstwhile editor of the PHOTODRAMATIST when it was the PHOTOPLAYWRIGHT, has recently written three five reel photoplays which were produced featuring Lester Cuneo and Francelia Billington. They are "Blue Blazes," "The Ranger and the Law," and "Pat O' Paradise."

Mr. Meehan was on the B. B. Hampton scenario staff for some time, and has just contracted to adapt Gene Stratton-Porter's stories to the screen.

Neither of these mistakes is without reason. One who is enthusiastically ambitious naturally wants to make good in his chosen field as quickly as possible. And the "would be" photoplay-dramatist has heard of some spectacular rises to fame and fortune among those prominent in the cinema profession. The impression probably has been gained that these examples are the rule, and not the exception. As to the other mistakes, it is not unnatural to presume that if one can produce just as good stories as many of the mediocre screen dramas we see nowadays, the studios will accept them. "By their works ye shall know them" should apply to the producer as well as any other mortal, we may conclude.

After fifteen months apprenticeship in the picture writing game, I am wholly convinced that the logic of these arguments is entirely wrong. For the average person—and certainly most of us are the average—there is no royal road to

screen success. Downright hard work, painstaking, unremittent study is the only formula worth sticking to. Breaking into the scenario writing field is just about the same as breaking into the field of magazine writing. The pathway is likely to be strewn with rejection slips!

Yet, when one pauses to consider the successes of some of our best known fiction writers of today—successes that followed in the wake of innumerable rejections—this apparently cold-water advice should be no deterrent to one possessed of genuine, all-wool ambition. To the man or woman who would rush out here to Los Angeles to become a photoplaywright I would ask: If you decided to become a short story writer, would you take the next train to New York to peddle your wares, just because New York is the center of the publishing business? Would it not be much more sensible to stay at home, conscientiously study the technique of the screen, its story requirements, and experiment there until such a time as you had reason to believe you could meet those requirements?

And above all, get the notion out of your head that writing the "just as good" brand of photoplays will open the magic portals to studio scenario departments. Bear in mind the fact that every studio knows of a score or more of experienced scenario writers whom they can invariably depend upon to produce the "just as good" brand of screen story. There is not one chance in a thousand that they will reject the work of these writers, whose product is known, in favor of the unknown writer, unless the latter has produced and submitted an article superior to the general average of stories that are submitted.

To produce a better screen story is no easy matter. It requires patience, an intelligent knowledge of screen values, and a willingness to plug away in spite of an avalanche of rejection slips. I venture the guess that among a majority of the members of the Authors' League of America today, we would find that the first score of stories were more or less summarily rejected before the magazine editors began to sit up and take notice. With the rewards infinitely greater, and the competition equally as keen, why should we expect different results in motion pictures?

Now all of this is most emphatically not intended to be discouraging. If it does discourage someone who is not willing to work tirelessly for screen success, it is just as well, too. But I am one who believes that the prospects for the screen writer who knows his business are better than they ever were, and that they will become still more favorable. "Good screen stories are a mighty scarce article," said the reader for one of the foremost directors in the business when I talked with her a few days ago. And that is the general concensus of opinion, as I find it.

Saleable screen stories are not being turned out as an after-dinner pastime, nor while the electric washing machine is churning up the week's laundry. More and more the public is demanding strong screen stories; the exhibitor knows it, and he is passing the demand along to the producer. Famous authors are not going to fill the demand. They will probably continue to write occasionally for the screen, but I believe most of them, primarily, will "stick to their last" and write for the mediums to which they have trained their talents: magazines and books.

The next five years will undoubtedly see many new names become familiar to the motion picture fan. Those names will belong to folks who are not afraid of work, nor rejection slips. They will belong to ambitious men and women who have the talent for creating screen drama, and who have perfected their ability in the old reliable school with the motto over the door, "practice makes perfect."



PHOTODRAMATISTS, heed: The world refuses to be saved from its sins.



CHARACTERIZATION: What the producers want you to put into your scenario.

This Side of Nirvana

By Ted Le Berthon

We are happy to announce the *Photodramatist* as the official organ of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America, beginning with this issue. The membership of the Screen Writers' Guild includes not only practically all representative photodramatists, but many of America's foremost novelists, short story writers, and playwrights—who have also written for the screen.

Poor Duck!

A young screen writer has written me complaining that his very first brain child, a youngster upon whom he had lavished years of parental affection, is today unrecognizable as his own loved mental offspring—after being put through a finishing school in Hollywood presided over by a certain cinema director. As a full-fledged photoplay, the story reflects the alien influence of professors of continuity, cutting, editing, sub-titling, close-upping, and interpolation.

Now, the screen writer in question is a poor logician, to say the least. No story will ever appear on the screen just as the writer visualized it. It's impossible, unthinkable. If one thousand painters were asked to read a chapter from a book, and to translate onto canvas a character or descriptive passage therefrom, we should have a thousand different pictures—none of which would be the picture the author of the book had visualized. A motion picture production in toto is a sequence of paintings.

A director will interpret a story to the author's perfect satisfaction when everyone is agreed on the interpretation of a Biblical passage, when the Los Angeles Times and the Appeal to Reason concur in their criticisms of a political speech, and porpoises walk down Broadway fin in wing with bumble bees.

The Photopoem

In magazines it is quite customary to print poems as "fillers," which serve a number of purposes. The aesthetic tone of the magazine is elevated, its physical construction improved, and the ever welcome element of variety introduced. Why not the "photopoem' on cinema theatre programs? The earlier Paramount-Post Scenics were sub-titled with quotations from the major poets, but that struck me as a cart-before-the-horse process. Why not take some of our peculiarly adaptable narrative poems and film story-scenes from them, using lines and stanzas from the poems as subtitles? The sweet homeliness of Whitcomb Riley's "Old Sweetheart of Mine," the weirdness of Wilde's "Harlot's House," the passion of Byron's "Love on the Island" from "Don Juan," or the exalted beauty of Keats' "Eve of St. Agnes"—what photopoems they would make. Even the typical nature scenics could be improved through being based on such abstract poems as Shelley's "Clouds" or Keats' "To Autumn." What a flaming picture Edwin Arnold's "Grishma—the Season of Heat" would present, with its drama of night and day and elemental forces.

Contemporary minor poets could keep the wolf at a distance, if a market were created for their wares in Filmdom. Probably, in the last analysis, their poems would come closer to matching the average person's comprehensive powers than would the lofty and often involved, obscure verse of the masters.

A step in the direction of the photopoem are the scenics of the Post Pictures Corporation, notably "My Barefoot Boy," "A Bit Old Fashioned" and "In the Great North." It will pay any photodramatist interested in the possible development of the photopoem to see these scenics. We may be fronting a new horizon, and who knows but that we shall gradually distinguish—drifting toward us across the ocean of eternity—a barqueful of photopoets?

Morals and the Movies

This is the title of an unsigned article in *The Nation* for April 20th which should interest every photodramatist. With cen-

sorship battering at our doors and leading representatives of the photoplay art adopting heroic measures and phrases to defeat it, particularly on the grounds that the protagonists of censorship are Puritanical—this article proffers the same charge against the movies! The writer in *The Nation* denounces censorship for the very fundamental reason that it is purely destructive and that "morality is more than a vacuum; art is something beyond an assertion of 'Thou Shalt Not.'" He holds a poor opinion of the cinema art, and I am inclined to believe he has been so unfortunate as to view only those picture productions which struck a Pollyanish or Jack Daltonesque note. Come to think of it, wasn't it *The Nation* which printed Lewisohn's damning critique of "Way Down East," wherein Mr. Griffith's glorious pot-boiler was held up as a masterpiece of melodrama which would—because of the popularity it would achieve through its thrills and sentimentality—retard the spiritual progress of America twenty years? Why indict the entire motion picture art because of the antiquated code of ethics exploited in "Way Down East?" Here are a few "hit and miss" generalities from the article:

"Broadly speaking, the only immorality in Art is untruth. The movies are spreading the absurd sex doctrine that there is just one man predestined for every woman, and vice-versa; that the chief end of each is finding the other, and that subsequently there is nothing to do but live happily—and easily—ever after. In the movies and the magazines we are all handsome, healthy heroes, or dark, dire villains; there is no success but making money, and the shop girl preserves her virtue, not for virtue as its own reward, but to attain happiness by marrying a millionaire . . . the untruthful picture of life is the real immorality . . ."

The Palmer Clubs

If ever there was an unsound idea, it is that of a number of students of the Palmer department of education in starting Palmer Clubs. Now, the Palmer School teaches through correspondence—and has evolved some of the best screen writers in the field; but surely it is inadvisable for a group of students, sans a competent instructor in the flesh, to get together and confuse one another with their various personal prejudices.

To begin with, much grief has been reported from several of these "clubs." In some instances, students have been swerved completely from the path of genuine study of the Palmer course and any concurrent creative effort, through absorbing the misconceptions and misinterpretations of fellow students. A veritable Tower of Babel must have existed in one club, which sent out an S. O. S. to Frederick Palmer, asking how they might best emerge safely from the confusion and errors fallen into.

It was Emerson who said: "It is only as a man puts off from himself all external support and stands alone that I see him to be strong and to prevail." It is an eternal truth that nothing can bring you success but yourself! It is the weakness that makes for the herd instinct that conspires against the only principle of intrinsic success.

The person who studies alone and creates alone is a thousand times more apt to be original than the person who has absorbed the thoughts of a hundred associates. But the greater harm is in the working without a competent instructor, one who has actually written and sold photoplays. Can an army do without a general, or a symphonic orchestra without a conductor? Can one imagine a number of people interested in botany securing some botanical works and proceeding in classes without a botany teacher? It can't be done, because in an infinite universe there are an infinite variety of mentalities—any one of which will react differently than another to any given subject. The individual student of botany, who will burn the midnight oil and who is profound and astute enough to think a thing out for himself—may hie himself to his room or garret and eventually master the principles of botany. As one of a herd, never!

But perhaps the greatest harm of the Palmer Club idea is in the fact that in any group of students there are the average number of pessimists. The bewhiskered proverb of the bad apple in the barrel of good apples is once again applicable; a student who might by himself or herself fight against early failures is often discouraged by some mournful chap who says: "It can't be done; you might as well quit." In one Palmer Club that disbanded the disintegration process started when the vibrations of one hapless little discourager began filtering around. Almost every member of the club submitted at least one manuscript to the Palmer revision department. Every one was returned. One or two gloomy mortals did the rest, and almost every member of the "club" began to believe that he or she

simply lacked any talent, that the future was hopeless.

Alas, all the great writers of fiction had dozens—in some cases hundreds—of stories rejected before selling one; but evidently the "club" members did not realize that; probably none of them had ever read Jack London's "Martin Eden," the story of his own failures before success came. But Jack London studied and pondered and created in his own miserable little room—and was never subjected to the discouragements of well meaning fellow "club members."

Two people may successfully collaborate in any study, or in the creation of a work of art, but there can only be one result when ten or fifteen amateur screen writers get together: hopeless confusion.

The Stage Goes to School

Thompson Buchanan, who has given the stage and screen "Life" and "Civilian Clothes,"—he is at present a supervising director with Famous Players-Lasky—believes that the stage will go to school to the screen, to its everlasting artistic welfare. He thinks playwrights will make better plays after studying the technique of photoplay writing. Buchanan believes the screen plays of the past two years have surpassed the stage plays in point of depth and subtlety, due—he says—to the fact that in a photoplay a single gesture or glance takes the place of numerous lines of dialogue; in other words, the art of pantomime is subtler, more poetic, more fluid. Words seem cheap, and our highest thoughts and emotions are, for some metaphysical reason, rarely voiced. A single glance may speed a message that hours of speech could not. Do not simple gestures often cause troops of long forgotten incidents to suddenly sweep across the foregrounds of consciousness? Buchanan's theory that the stage needs an economy of dialogue is founded on an apparent fact in nature.

Music to the Rescue

"Music is an almost infallible solvent," says Arthur Kay, one of America's foremost symphony orchestra conductors, in a recent interview. "I know of several writers of established authority who maintain Victrolas and an assortment of records—for the sole purpose of inspiring them to certain moods or of transporting them mentally to some certain locale. Not only are the emotions enriched, but in many cases the writer whose head is dull or distracted will find that some musical composition has the power of clearing away the mental obstructions and restoring a poise that makes for creative effort."

Neilan for Originals

"For some time I have contended that the original scenario can be made into as big a box-office attraction as the story or play known to thousands," said Marshall Neilan recently. "The mad scramble and foolish expenditure of fortunes for books and plays has been entirely unnecessary. Had the producer shown more zeal in his production and less energy in competing with his fellow producers in purchasing well known works as screen material, the enormous prices now demanded for well known works would not exist.

"A good picture with an unknown story may open weaker at a theatre than the film from the famous story, but it will bring in many people during the remainder of the week through word of mouth advertising, with the result that the total week's business will compare most favorably with that of any picture from a famous story."

Mr. Neilan believes that a good photoplay is the best advertisement, and not the publicity the story has had. He compares his "Dinty" and "The River's End," the first an original, and the second from a popular novel. "Dinty" has made the most money.

Confirms "High Brow Hand-Me-Downs"

W. Somerset Maugham, writing in the May *North American Review,* says, among other things: "I venture to insist that the technique of writing for the pictures is not that of writing for the stage nor that of writing a novel. It is something betwixt and between. It has not quite the freedom of the novel, but it certainly has not the fetters of the stage. It is a technique of its own, with its own conventions, its own limitations, and its own effects. For that reason I believe that in the long run it will be found futile to adapt stories for the screen from novels or from plays—we all know how difficult it is to make even a passable play out of a good novel—and that any advance in this form of entertainment which may eventually lead to something artistic, lies in the story written directly for projection on the white sheet."

Mr. Maugham's statement is quite significant, especially as it preceded Frederick Collins' article on "Highbrow Hand-Me-Downs" by a month. Incidentally—of course just incidentally—Mr. Maugham has sailed for the South Seas, to be gone *indefinitely.*

Don't Limit Yourself

By Frank Condon

Editor's Note: Mr. Condon, a famous short story writer, now writing photoplays for Paramount Pictures, opposes a popular contention.

MANY have said, "When writing a photoplay, write it to fit a certain star or screen performer."

My experience in photoplay writing, however, has taught me that I can secure better results by not attempting to write for any certain personality but to write for the sake of the story alone.

The average fiction story is purely a product of the imagination. The author creates his characters, his situations, his plot, and as he progresses with his story, the characters become very real to him as he moves them about as in a game of chess. The immortal Dickens is said to have declared, upon finishing his notable story, "David Copperfield," that the characters in that story had become so real, so human, so much a part of his life, that it was with a feeling of great sadness, like that which would be occasioned by the sudden parting of many dear friends, that he finally finished his story and ended with a stroke of his pen their fanciful existence.

When the writer begins his story, however, with a certain real personality in mind, gives him the principal role and keeps him constantly in mind all during the writing of the story, he surrounds himself with limitations; he sets a boundary line to genius, which he must not overstep; he can not have free rein, and the result is that his story or photoplay gradually becomes more the mechanical instead of the inspirational. He will suppress a certain human note or situation because he may feel that the personality of his star-hero will not dovetail with that situation.

Therefore, my policy has come to be this: Forget that a star or actor ever existed. Get your idea, create your characters and allow them to do the most natural things that such characters would do under the situations involved.

I would much rather write five stories to get one good screen vehicle, with a free rein to my imagination, than to write one acceptable photoplay on the cut-to-measure idea.



Want Collaborators

The following Palmer students desire to get in touch with other students in their respective communities for the purpose of collaboration or mutual study:

Akron, Ohio: B. Blair Young, 968 Bell St.
Brooklyn, N. Y.: Charles J. Hausman, 492 Greene Ave.
Atlanta, Georgia: Wm. B. Ramsey, 389 Cherokee Ave.
Baltimore, Md.: Adolph Rool, 1616 Bank Street.
Birmingham, Ala.: H. R. Waite, 703 N. 19th St.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Mrs. Albert C. Conklin, care General Delivery.
Chicago, Ill.: F. W. Ickes, 1221 E. 65th St.
Cleveland, Ohio: Emil J. Mauek, 3468 West Forty-ninth St.
Detroit, Mich.: Harold R. Knapp, 539 Melbourne Ave.
Duluth, Minn.: Jack Jones, Jr., Hermantown Road.
East Palestine, Ohio: S. Mack Williams, Box 323.
Elgin, Ill.: Elmer E. Schenet, 466 E. Chicago St.
Franklin, La.: David W. Alpha, Box 129.
Hiawasse, Ga.: Walter E. Warren, Box 76.
Jersey City, N. J.: Estelle Max, 290 Jackson Ave.
Kansas City, Mo.: Aline L. Hayes, 3535 College Ave.
Little Falls, N. Y.: Mrs. Mary E. Stewart Evans, 332 So. Ann St.
Los Angeles, Cal.: Mrs. Leo Lehmann, 315½ Gertrude St.
Los Angeles, Calif.: F. H. G. Seidenstucker, 562-B East 16th St.
Minneapolis, Minn.: Vera Smith Greenough, 4841 Lyndale Ave., South.
Missoula, Mont.: Leo Bernard Mayotte, Shapard Hotel.
Montreal, Quebec: Bruce Wilkin, 2621 Hutchison St.
New Brighton, Staten Isl. N. Y.: Carl L. Grupen, 17 St. Marks Place.
New York City: Elsie T. Scherer, 881 Fox St., Bronx.
New York City: Pasquale J. Vitacco, care Y. M. C. A., 222 Bowery.
New York, N. Y.: David W. Alpha, 512 West 140 St.
New York, N. Y.: Charles G. Scholz, 2471 Davidson Ave.
New York, N. Y.: D. W. Alpha, 522 West 140th St.
Omaha, Neb.: Frank E. Parkins, 6309 Binney St.
Parkersburg, Pa.: Oric C. Peters, 328 First St.
Philadelphia, Ja.: Miss Marie Ward, 1822 Berks St.
Pittsburgh, Pa.: Louis B. Markell, 558 Allison Ave.
Cebu, Cebu, P. I.: Mr. Francisco Yap, P. O. B. 247.
Porterville, Pa.: Norman G. Wimer, R. F. D. No. 3.
Portland, Ore.: Miss Anna Finkelstein, 605 Fifth St.
Passaic, N. J.: Mary M. Yokank, 43 Dayton Ave.
Ranger, Tex.: J. A. Cowart, Box 1281.
San Francisco, Cal.: M. S. Yerkovich, 67 Fourth St.
Springfield, Mo.: Lillian Martin, 1014 N. Boulevard.
St. Louis, Mo.: Clarence F. Striegel, 6179 Westminster Place.
Syracuse, N. Y.: John R. Roock, 106 Hier Ave.
Washington, D. C.: Mrs. Rose B. Rehlander, 1405 Rhode Island Ave.
Youngstown, Ohio: James S. Queer, 25 Breaden St.
Toronto, Canada: Daniel Taft, 330 Brock Avenue.

The Screen Writers' Guild

By Percy Heath

A LITTLE more than a year ago an organization of scenario writers which would bear to the motion picture industry a relationship similar to that established by the Authors' League of America with the publishing business was a plan, the desirability and feasibility of which has been evident to a number of enthusiastic professionals for some time. This little body of "earnest thinkers" put its ideas and hopes on letter paper and mailed copies to fellow practitioners whose postal addresses were Hollywood and its environs, inviting these craftsmen—and women—to meet them at dinner at the Los Angeles Athletic Club and talk over the matter. They met and talked, and the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America came into being. The originators of the organization plan had sounded the Authors' League on that body's attitude toward an association of writing men and women who had selected the "silver sheet" as their medium of expression, and the Authors' League had convincingly expresed its willingness to take such an organization into its arms and pat it on the back, which explains how, at its christening, the new Guild had as its godfather that powerful organization whose membership lists include the name of just about every first rate literature creator in these United States and its colonies.

On July 14th will take place the first annual meeting of the Screen Writers' Guild, and the reports that will be made by the officers and the chairmen of the various Standing Committees will be reports of progress and achievement. The Screen Writers' Guild today is what the business journals would call a "going" concern, functioning not only to the limit of its capacity as defined and set forth in the first conceived articles of its purposes and reasons-for-being—but away and beyond the limitations imposed on a strictly business organization which operates efficiently but only in the adjustment and regulation of its members' professional relations with producers.

The Plans and Purposes

of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America are clearly outlined in this article by Percy Heath, of the Realart Scenario Staff. Every month from now on Mr. Heath will contribute several columns of interesting news from the Guild—and from the Screen Writers' Club.

The Screen Writers' Guild having justified its organization not alone by its works for the good of its members, but as well by its appreciated efforts on behalf of the motion picture producer and the industry as such — is about to extend its scope, without in any way lessening its activities as a guild of the Authors' League or weakening its standing as the representative body of motion picture writers. The Guild is about to perform a startling piece of legerdemain known as turning itself into a club. At No. 6716 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood—corner of Las Palmas—is a spacious and beautiful residence structure, ideally suited to the purposes of a club. It has been purchased with the intent to transform it into a club house and the home and headquarters of the Screen Writers' Guild. At the annual meeting of the Guild, the project and the property will be offered to the Guild membership.

The Club-house property was purchased by the Las Palmas and Sunset Corporation,

whose officers are members of the Guild and whose stock is for sale only to members of the Guild. The purchase was not made for the purposes of profit but in order to be able to provide *now* what the Guild would sooner or later demand—a club house. Preparations for the proper furnishing and equipping of the club house are in the hands of competent members of the Executive Committee and Council, and the formal opening of the Club at a not long distant date will be an event of much greater significance than a mere "housewarming"; it will be a testimonial to the success of the Guild itself. Also it will be the first motion picture professional club to be established in the capitol of the industry. And as among its record of charter members there will be a dozen names of writers, any one of which would serve to attract attention to a new organization, the new Club will unquestionably assume rank as one of those comparatively few organizations which are the boasts of the communities in which they are established, and the privilege of joining which is eagerly sought.

Making Both Sides Win

Solomon was a wise judge if we accept the memoirs of his friends as wholly credible, but even his most enthusiastic admirers do not declare that his sonorous, scintillating judgments left everybody satisfied—it is a safe bet that always there was one party to the proceedings who felt that he had a kick coming. Which is reason enough for proclamation of Eugene Presbrey as the first genuine, blown-in-the-bottle, 100-percent-pure adjudicator to step in between the principals of a scrap and with a few well chosen words, punctuated by a smile or two, not only remove the casus belli, but to convince each of the contestants that he is the winner. As Chairman of the Guild's Grievance Committee, Mr. Presbrey has performed nobly. Producers whose representatives have associated with him on the field of arbitration have been only too willing to acclaim his clear-sightedness and absolute fairness—a truth which could not have been more clearly demonstrated than by the case to which the first paragraph refers.

It was a difference of long standing between a writer and a producer. Each not only thought himself in the right, but felt fully capable of justifying his position before a court of law. Preparations for the submission of the case had been made, and to a casual observer there would have appeared no possible chance of keeping the complainant and defendant out of the halls of justice. But Presbrey did it. The day before that set for the trial, he not only got the opponents, but their lawyers as well, to meet at his home, and there with the Chairman of the Guild's Grievance Committee acting as judge, the case was argued. And when Judge Presbrey brought in his verdict, even the opposing lawyer could find no cause for quibbling—while the principals staged a reconciliation scene that was touching to behold.

Financial

Use the old car for another year and put the money in Las Palmas and Sunset Corporation stock. As a member of the Screen Writers you will be helping your Guild; as an investor you'll be helping yourself. Drive around to 6716 Sunset Boulevard, look the Club House over, and see if you wouldn't like to be part owner of it!

Legal

For a number of weeks A. S. LeVino and Elmer Rice, Chairman and Assistant Chairman respectively of the Guild's Legal Committee, have been at work juggling "whereases" and "aforesaids" in an effort to draft a standard contract which will be acceptable to free-lance continuity writers and motion picture producers, and will assure the rights of each. In turn, LeVino and Rice have produced a number of brilliant efforts which have been returned to their authors for revision only because the Legal Committee itself was not convinced that it had reduced the draft to the fewest possible words necessary to cover every possible contingency. At the last meeting of the Executive Committee, Mr. Rice reported that he confidently expected to be able at the annual meeting of the Guild to submit a contract that can be written on the back of a postage stamp, while LeVino is known to have been recently in correspondence with a gent who got his name into the papers by engraving the Lord's Prayer on a pin head.



MONSIEUR History, to the page in the Hotel Cosmos: "Please page Obscurity Alley for the Movie Heroes of 1915; a local sculptor has advertised for someone to pose as 'Adonis at forty.'"

Highbrow Hand-Me-Downs

By Frederick Collins

THE trouble started on Broadway, wherever two or three actors were gathered together, and spread east and west until everybody who was anybody on the bright side of the footlights knew that gold had once more been discovered in California. Since the caravan journeyings of the forty-niners—or, for that matter, since the flight of Mohammed from Mecca —there has been no hegira so precipitous or so complete. Every theatrical personage, from Beerbohm Tree to Eddie Foy, entrained forthwith for Hollywood. This was ten years ago—and of the lot only Fairbanks of the lambent smile and Chaplin of the shuffling feet remain to get the gold!

Now this same cinema dementia has seized the men and women who write our short stories, our novels and our plays. Just as the famous beauties of the spoken stage turned their shapely backs on the public that had made their fame, the favorite authors of fiction and the drama have turned their faces toward California and the quest of movie gold. The result—so some critics believe—is the mass of second-hand novels, shopworn plays, rummage-sale short stories, and the many other pretentious highbrow hand-me-downs that serve as motion-picture scenarios without much added luster to the author or the screen.

The analogy between the transplanted author and the transplanted actor is a tempting one, especially as there is reason to believe that the same bleak fate awaits them both; but in fairness to the author it must be said that he brought to the pictures, many years earlier than they would otherwise have acquired them, many things they badly needed—better ideas, better plots, better taste and, most important of all, better audiences. Thousands crowded to see Barrie's first picture, solely because it was Barrie's. They were shocked to find The Admirable Crichton renamed Male and Female, and they were stunned, or should have been, to rediscover Barrie's heroine, in the intimate moments of the early morning, through the keyhole of her bedroom door. They were — these worshippers from Thrums — very properly disappointed in the highbrow hand-me-down that had lured them to the theater; but they had come.

And perhaps on the way out they turned to find their eyes and thoughts cooled by the white expanse of an arctic ice floe; or perhaps they saw the great Chaplin bending that wonderful face into the finest pantomime the world has seen; or perhaps they saw the Tiger of France hunt the tiger of Africa at the bottom of the earth. If they did, they felt the call of the pictures, as millions have felt it before them, and they came again; and it is their continued presence that will ultimately make impossible such wanton perversions as most highbrow hand-me-downs turn out to be. This with-

The Sensation of 1921

THIS article, which created a tremendous furore when it appeared in a recent issue of the Saturday Evening Post, is here reproduced through special permission of that publication. It is copyrighted, 1921, by the Curtis Publishing Co. Mr. Collins' article has caused a greater sensation in the studios of Hollywood and Culver City than any article in years. He has no reverence for high sounding names, nor does he hesitate to call a spade a spade.

out doubt is the famous author's chief contribution to the screen.

Books and Moving Pictures

In rare instances, however, where the theme of a book or a play has been especially suited to the screen—as in Doctor Jekyll and The Four Horsemen—the metamorphosed story has produced an excellent picture. These cases are exceedingly few, but there are countless instances where a story or a play has furnished the idea for a worth-while film, as in Broken Blossoms; or the bare plot, as in Way Down East—and in these ways the author has had a part in many good pictures when good pictures were rare. It may be that their temporary monopoly of the screen has retarded the development of real screen writers, but they have certainly shown students of the new technic many things to avoid, and perhaps they have held the center of the screen just long enough to make the entrance of the real masters most effective. So though we cannot forgive the motives that diverted our literary idols into the movies—most of them with hand out and tongue in cheek!—we cannot absolutely condemn the results.

But when you have said this much for the money-mad author you have said about all there is to say; for, artist and technician that he is, the author must know that he has no real place in the movies.

He must know, if he did not in the beginning, that the motion picture is no more like the written story and the spoken drama than the art of Neysa McMein is like the art of Pavlowa. If artists were interchangeable like the parts of a standard car, if story writers and painters and architects and poets and musicians and dancers and playwrights and embroiderers and sculptors could produce with equal facility novels and canvases and public buildings and sonnets and arias and gavottes and tragedies and doilies and Venuses, if it were true that any artist could achieve any art—then it would also be true that the man who was born to work in words, like the skilled novelist and playwright and short-story writer, would be the ideal man to work in pictures. Since none of these things is true, since not even all musicians can do everything musical or all writers everything literary, and since the long roll of movie outcasts contains almost every distinguished name in literary history—the transmogrified author must know that he has failed.

That he should appreciate the full horror of his failures is at the present time improbable; for no one yet knows the unrealized possibilities of the motion picture, or how far it will ultimately differ from the written story and the spoken drama. But this we do know: The author, or word-writer, gets his effect by an arrangement of words; the picture-writer get his by an arrangement of pictures. We have all seen children play the game of taking ten words and fitting them into a sentence. That is authorship. The difference between the ordinary writer and the extraordinary one is a matter of the choice and arrangement of words. Give Bernard Shaw ten words, or a hundred, or a whole language, and he will produce an arrangement unlike anything John Jones' mind is likely to conceive. Anybody can find plots—a man died the other day who had invented four hundred of them!—but it is given to very few to place one word in relation to another in such a way as to produce character, suspense, feeling.

If, as we have seen ,the chief difference as a writer between the unknown author of four hundred novels and a really great writer is in the physical arrangement of his words, how can the writer's high gifts—which are certainly those of language—find expression in a medium where language should be neither seen nor heard? The answer is that unless the writer has the twin gift of telling stories in pictures as well as words they cannot and should not. Not one book in a thousand can be dramatized, even when adapted to the stage by a skilled playwright. Otherwise we should have each year a hundred successful adaptations instead of two or three. Every playgoer knows that all truly great dramas must be written for the stage. As for the same person being able to write books and plays—to do even two kinds of writing in words—the phenomenon is very, very rare.

Talent Misapplied

Just as the same fingers seldom express genius on the piano and the violin, and the same hands seldom create Madonnas and façades, and the same voices seldom achieve opera and oratory, the kindred gifts of the written and the spoken word have seldom found expression in one mind. And so—although it may seem logical that a man who can tell stories in one medium is the ideal man to tell them in another—the history of literature itself tells us that it is not done. It tells us, as clearly as though it foresaw the invention of the motion picture, that the last place to look for masters of a new technic is in the ranks of those habituated to the old. It tells us that in

ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the man who handles paper and ink with the touch of the master will find the celluloid of the films exploding in his hands!

The case against the author is so strong and so utterly obvious that no one but the old-time movie man could have fallen into such expensive folly. The type of man who happened to be present at the birth of the new industry was not given to fine distinctions. The fact that pianists and dancers, word-writers and picture-writers, called themselves artists was enough to prove to him the interchangeability of fingers and toes and words and pictures. This man, groping in darkness thicker than that of his own auditorium, blindly turned for help to fiction and the drama. Needing men to tell stories in pictures, he hired men who told stories in words. He might have hired poets and composers. The same man might have hired Tetrazzini to build the Grand Central Station. He was that kind of man.

It is easy to forgive the old-time movie man his ignorance, and hard to forgive the author his guilty knowledge, but the important thing for the reader and the movie fan is to see how best this ill-assorted pair can straightway be divorced — and something better substituted. Frankly, the movie man is giving considerable thought to this problem himself. He may not be distressed by the author's crime against art, but he is infinitely pained by crimes against himself. Taking thirty or forty or fifty thousand dollars for a mediocre story that nine-tenths of the movie public does not know even by name has come to be a crime in the movie man's eyes.

Paying such sums for goods of doubtful value is certainly the kind of criminal recklessness that wrecks a bonanza or exhausts a mine. And it is just beginning to be recognized that the motion-picture business is neither of these things. Here is one of the five great industries of the world, probably near the peak of its commercial prosperity, capable of producing a profit of two hundred million dollars a year, and yet we look in vain for movie magnates' palaces on Fifth Avenue, for parterre boxes at the Metropolitan, for villas by the sea—this in spite of the recognized fact that in the movie business them that has 'em wears 'em, and wears 'em on the front! The reason for the comparative poverty of the original movie baron — padded poverty though it be—is the sense he had of his own inferiority in the presence of an unfathomable mystery. He knew less about acting than the actor, less about directing than the director, and in most cases nothing at all about the work of the writer; and in the cowardice of his ignorance he divided his fortune among them.

This profligacy of the old-time movie man created a condition of chaos in the industry that has at last forced reorganization and readjustment. The new type of business man, who will henceforth sign the movie checks, will analyze his product and his market; and the first thing he will discover is how little the inferior star and the borrowed author enter into the excellence of either. The facilities for this analysis are at his right hand. The man in Sedalia, Missouri, who turned his profitable haberdashery store into a picture show by taking out the counters and putting in chairs, was, and still is, a merchant. He must know what goods his public wants, and he must buy and sell those goods at the right price; or, in the language of his new trade, he must know what films draw the crowd and he must pay a rental price for their use in strict relation to their drawing power. He is therefore continually analyzing his business and reflecting the result of his analysis in the films he rents and the price he is willing to pay.

He finds that he can afford to pay fifty dollars a day, or even a hundred, for Pickword, Fairbanks or Chaplin, because they pack his house and please his people; and that he cannot afford to pay twenty-five dollars or even five dollars for an indifferent film by the eminent but to him unknown author, Mr. Gazink—if, as so often happens, only half his people come and half of them walk out. But the manufacturer of the film, who has paid Mr. Gazink a large sum of money for his story instead of paying the same money to a star of known drawing power—the manufacturer must get just as high a figure for his film or lose money. This is a business situation in which only the very fit survive.

Box-Office Criticism

In facing these drab commercial facts we have wandered far from the temples of art—but so has Mr. Gazink. He was keen to face the alluring commercial considerations that brought him into the movies; he may as well face those that may be driving him out. At least, he should know that if he hopes for continued profit from condescending to the movies he must ultimately satisfy the men who sell his pictures and sign his checks. Unfortunately for him, and fortunately for the public, they are per-

haps the coldest-blooded, plainest-spoken and quickest-acting bunch that ever collided with the artistic temperament. One instance of their jovial brutality will suffice.

Some years ago, before the legitimate actor fell out of the movie heaven—the annoying analogy between author and actor will recur—a distinguished actress of great beauty and charm gave a dinner to the men who controlled the fifty largest picture theaters of the country. The dinner was a bubbling success. Wine flowed as wine could flow in those days, and the lady smiled as only she could smile. Finally the hostess, who was at that time drawing a salary equal to an author's ransom, made a neat little speech, in which she asked for suggestions and criticisms to help her in her picture work. She got them. The Seattle man's patrons did not like her walk; the Detroit public required something a little more snappy in the wardrobe. Chicago objected to her always being photographed with her good side to camera; Boston found her cold; and finally the gentleman from Louisiana closed the meeting with a solemn warning that his women patrons did not like her corsets! The hostess at that dinner never made another picture. Neither would you. Neither would Mr. Gazink.

The public itself is even more brutal than its representatives. It is axiomatic in the trade that two poor pictures in succession will kill any star; and by a test of equal acidity there is scarcely a famous author who has not qualified for slaughter. But with the author's public the chief factor against him is time. The movie mills grind so rapidly that the new art has long since exhausted the storehouses of the old, with the result that most of the really good things have already been done, and nothing is left us but the mediocrities. All the great melodramas from The Fall of Man to The Heart of Maryland, all the great yarns from Homer's Iliad to Mark Twain's Connecticut Yankee—every specimen of the written word in the vaguest way suited to the screen has passed before the eyes of the movie audiences, until they know more literature—and know it wrong—than any other class of people in the world.

Real Screen Writers

As for the current successes — the best sellers and the sure-fire hits—the cheerful movie plagiarist now beats them to the screen. Cheating Cheaters, a stage mystery play apparently born to movieize, was done a hundred times, under different names and with minor twists of plot, before the original reached the screen; Doris Keane's Romance, preceded by a thousand imitations, failed decisively in picture form. And so it goes. The choicest treasures of the library and the most ingenious plots and original ideas of the stage are no longer novelties in the movies—and the movie public must have novelty.

In the old days, before the motion picture emerged from a flickering mass of cheapness and vulgarity, the manufacturer of pictures was able to satisfy his public with films bearing his own trade-mark; but the magic names soon lost their charm and their existence. Thereafter the sheep-minded movie man plunged into the business of making stars. This was the period when he raked the stage and the halls for actors and actresses to whom he could hitch his wagon.

Confronted with the waning brilliance of all but a few of the real movie-trained stars, he began to magnify the importance of the director; but for some obscure psychological reason the popular appeal of the director began and ended with one man, Griffith. Once more the wily movie man looked about for a talking point and hit upon the author; but the name of the author, like the name of the director, has failed to fire the imagination of movie audiences. Crudely, the author has failed to sell goods to the public. And now the newest tendency of the manufacturer is once more to emphasize his own trade names—new ones of his own choosing—which means just one thing: That the name of the author and the fame of his works, having served their time as novelties, are through. Every dollar spent to popularize the trade name of the manufacturer is one more proof that the transplanted author, like the transplanted actor, has lost his value even as a decoy.

The author's exit from the screen, which is obviously not only predestined but immediate, makes room for the real screen writer—the man who has learned to express himself in pictures instead of words, the man who combines the same qualities that we immediately recognize in the work of the leading screen actors. He need not smile like Fairbanks or walk like Chaplin or weep like Gish or pout like Pickford, but he must be able to create, by the choice and arrangement of the scenes in his picture, the more fundamental illusions that these four artists so successfully create.

The Fairbanks quality is projection.

When Douglas comes bounding into a peaceful movie scene he jumps right out of the picture into the audience. This would be fatal to a stage play, but it is great in the movies. The Chaplin quality is precision. Charlie is always in the picture, always doing the same things he would do on the stage, but—recognizing the far more exacting requirements of the camera—he does each thing more carefully and more precisely. Chaplin satisfies the camera; Fairbanks amazes it. The screen writer therefore who would use the full possibilities of his medium must combine the detail of a mosaic with the brilliant daubs of a poster.

The Gish quality is poetry. If you saw Broken Blossoms or Way Down East you know there is something about Lillian Gish so facile, so subtly shaded, that the expression of her face transmits emotion too delicate and elusive for the human eye, unaided by the searching lenses of the camera, to detect. The Pickford quality is personality.

There are other requisites, more or less mechanical, which the screen writer should have, but if he knows his four P's—projection, precision, poetry and personality—he knows his business. If, in addition, he is resourceful enough, since he is working in the newest of the so-called arts, to use the resources of the old—to take rhythm from the dancer and form from the sculptor, strength from the architect and beauty from the painter—he will make the motion picture what it should be, a protean symphony of all the arts.

Who will perform this miracle? There are at least four sources ready to supply men and women born with the four P's and already more or less trained in their use. The first and, as we have seen, the least promising source is the literary profession. There will always be a very few authors who have a certain flair for the screen. The next smallest but most immediately promising source is the motion-picture studio. Directors are emerging who have creative genius and the taste and education and fineness of feeling to express it. Scenario writers, too, must think in pictures or lose their jobs. This group is ready. The third source is what the baseball man calls the bushes—where the future greats with something in them are struggling to get it out. Many a youthful genius—a misfit in literature or painting—will find his medium of expression in motion pictures. The fourth and in the end the most promising source is the schools, the colleges and the movie theaters themselves.

No Happy End for Authors

Our chief concern is likely to be as to how far he has incapacitated himself for resuming his former job; and how far we are justified in receiving him. In other words, can the author come back? Some of the actors did.

Those who regarded the whole thing as a joy-ride, and stayed just long enough to fail, returned apparently unhurt to their former popularity. The more ambitious or more greedy actor, who lingered long enough to estrange his old public without gaining the affections of the new, is still wandering wearily between studio and stage. He might just as well be dead.

So it will be with the author. The worst offenders will be forgiven. The distinguished author, who did not need the money and who set a bad example to the others—he will find plenty of defenders. "After all," they will say, "his temptation was great and his knowledge small; he acted hastily and is sorry." But the lesser author, who did give sufficient thought to his new job to see that it was different from his old and yet could not resist its golden allurements is, like the disappointed actor, artistically dead. He is the man who began to write with one eye on the printing press and one on the projection machine until, between cross-eye and astigmatism, he rarely sees either.

So for the author there is for once no happy ending. Even from this brief autopsy it must be clear that the chance of his being able to stay where he is—in the movies—is exceedingly thin. The chance of his being able to come back into literature if he stays away too long, is even thinner. And the chance for him, if he does come back, grows daily more infinitessimal. For the world has not waited for the author—especially his world, which has changed more rapidly in this decade than in any other ten years since writing began; and the mind and temper of his readers have changed—diametrically. The author chose the wrong time in the history of the world to get off the main track; his cars may be loaded with gold, but his train stands idle on the spur. The world has thundered by. You cannot spend your best years making money and keep pace with a world that has been making miracles. You cannot bury your head in the ostrich farms of California and meet, unblinking, the light of a new day. You cannot let people forget you and rely on the fatted calf. You cannot be a failure in Eldorado and a hero in the old home town.

Join the Monthly Contest!

And Win a Cash Prize

COMMENCING this month, *The Photodramatist* is going to give every amateur screen writer or student of screen writing an opportunity to express himself or herself, and at the same time win a money prize. Every person who writes a photoplay or studies to write photoplays has some particular reason for so doing. In many cases, it is a belief that the screen is his or her logical medium of expression. Some people see all things pictorially, rather than in the abstract. Many started to write photoplays through some sudden change in their lives; others to keep the wolf from the door; some from curiosity or as an experiment; others through creative joy; others through wishing to give to the world some philosophical concept or to expound an economic theory.

The contest is to be based on the subject: Why I Am Writing Photoplays.

Why I Am Writing Photoplays

1st Prize . . .	$25
2nd Prize . . .	15
3rd Prize . . .	10

Articles Must Be Under 1,000 Words

Each month three prizes will be awarded—$25, $15, and $10, for the three best articles. All articles submitted must be under a thousand words, and when submitted, must be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope—in case they have to be returned. The winning articles will be published in The Photodramatist.

If possible, use a typewriter, and send all articles to Contest Editor, The Photodramatist.

Are you going to get in the swim? $25 is not a bad reward for an hour's actual work! How did you first conceive the idea of writing photoplays? What were some of your life experiences which led you to believe you had the interesting stories to tell? What made you think you possessed the natural gift of writing for the screen?

Now is the time to write this article! Procrastination is still stealing Time!



TO the super-intellectuals, the few bad photoplays produced are a worse menace to American art than the myriad meaningless bedroom farces and other piffle now stifling the American stage.



THE fellow who doesn't like photoplays is the same chap who doesn't like children or love stories or melodies.



DON'T tell the scenario editors how good you are; show 'em. Silence is the college yell of experience.



Gossip Street

From Hollywood Boulevard to Times Square

Naughtiness Rewarded

Hazel MacDonald, a Chicago newspaper "reporterette," recently interviewed Cecil B. DeMille as he was passing through the Windy City. When Cecil read the Chicago newspaper which printed the interview, he nearly swooned. Miss MacDonald had roasted him to a delicate turn; had verbally stabbed him, turned the dagger, and poured moulten lead in the wound! Then came the stroke of fineness that establishes Cecil B. DeMille forever as the possessor of an exalted sense of humor. Between laughs, he telegraphed the youngster and offered her a job! She accepted, and is now out in Hollywood writing the continuity for brother William DeMille's current photodrama. It's a big soul that can take a personal wallop and recognize it as a work of art.

The Student of Today

Is the Master of Tomorrow. Paul Schofield, a former Palmer student, is now on the Fox West Coast scenario staff.

Sell "Originals"

L. G. Rigby has just sold "The Drifter," an original, to Fox as a starring vehicle for Johnny Walker. Elizabeth Thacher, a Palmer student, has sold "No Children" to Chester Comedies.

Best "Original" Yet

Gertrude Nelson Andrews has sold an original photoplay, "Finding Home," to Thomas H. Ince. Several people in the inner circle at Culver City declare the story the masterpiece of 1921. Mrs. Andrews is a member of the Santa Barbara, Cal., "Fellowship," a co-operative colony operated by a group of idealists whose motto is "Love in Action." They believe that co-operation is the common sense thing—an eliminator of waste and a means of making Life easier to live. They plan to make their colony a world center of education. Mrs. Andrews, living in such an environment, has perhaps given to the screen a story written from the mountain peaks of spirit, in which the real rather than the apparent man is revealed.

Reforms

Jay Chapman, recently Director of Publicity for B. B. Hampton, is now engaged in writing photoplays.

Scenario Contest Winners

Frances White Elijah, of Santa Barbara, Cal., a student of the Palmer Course in Photoplay Writing, won the first prize of $2500 in the Los Angeles Express-J. Parker Read, Jr., Scenario Contest. A. Earl Kauffman, of York, Pa., also a Palmer student, won the second prize of $1500. The third prize of $1000 was won by Mrs. Anna B. Mezquida of San Francisco, another Palmer student. All three winning scenarios will be used as vehicles for Louise Glaum. Complete details will appear in the August PHOTODRAMATIST.

Frederick Palmer Lectures

Frederick Palmer addressed The Assistant Directors' Association in Hollywood the evening of June 10th on the subject of "The Future of the Photoplay." On June 14th he addressed the Cauldron Club in Pasadena, Calif., his subject being "Censorship and Blue Laws—Their Cause and Cure."

Appointed

Alfred A. Cohn, formerly editor of Photoplay Magazine, and for some time personal representative of Mary Pickford, but most recently the head of a book, play and photoplay brokerage which was perhaps the most formidable in America, has merged his interests with the Palmer Photoplay Corporation—and is now Director of Sales of the sales department of the Palmer organization. Mrs. Kate Corbaley remains as Department Sales Manager, Chief of the Reading Staff, and Story Consultant. Mr. Cohn has just left for New York, where he will close several pending deals of international scope for the Palmer organization.

Chinese Movies

The Wah Ming Motion Picture Company, of which Leong But Jung is director general, has started production in their new Boyle Heights Studio in Los Angeles on "Lotus Blossom," featuring Lady Tsen Mei. Tully Marshall is in the supporting cast. Dick Sherrer has prepared the continuity from an "original" by a young Chinese whose name has not been made public.

His Two Mothers?

Alice Duer Miller is writing a photoplay for Tom Moore entitled "His Two Mothers."

Humanitarianism

In this day, when so many people haven't enough clothes to wear, Viola Dana believes it's selfish for movie stars to spend fortunes on clothes which they only intend to use for scenes in a photoplay. In her next picture, her entire wardrobe, outside of the clothes she wears in one ball-room scene, will cost about fifteen dollars. All we hope is that further information does not reveal the fact that fourteen dollars and seventy-five cents of that amount went for a necklace!

High Finance

A motion picture financing corporation, of which Thomas H. Ince is an organizer, backer and probably will be the head, is to be established in Los Angeles. First announcements said that the organization will be financed from private capital and closely affiliated with the First National Bank of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Trust and Savings Bank. The corporation will make loans to companies having good scenarios, stars and plant facilities. Many things combine to make the project timely. In the past, the producers have had to assign from thirty to sixty-five per cent of production profits to those that make comparatively small loans to start operations of pictures that when produced could be used as security for large loans at small interest.

Pathetic Titles

The writer of comic photoplays ought to know that in many instances a striking title will ensure a reading. Among some of the recent comedy releases are "Assault and Flattery," "Robinson's Trousseau," and "The Reckless Sex."

Chaplin for President

The Proletarian, another Harvard University weekly, made its appearance in Cambridge a few weeks ago. It is issued in avowed opposition to The Aristocrat which started publication about a month previous. The following facetious paragraph is good for a chuckle from Max Eastman, Gene Debs, and one or two others: "The Proletarian stands frankly for the organization of the students' soviet, the coming shadow of which so outraged Dean Hodgson of Valparaiso. But in our immediate educational demands we are all for humanity. We ask only that the next president of Harvard should be 'in sympathy with the students.' Therefore, we support the claims of that great artist—Charles Chaplin."

Sans Sub-titles

"The Journey's End," a Hugo Ballin independent production to be released soon, is the first serious photodrama to be produced without sub-titles. It is said that the story unfolds so smoothly and logically that subtitling would have been superfluous.

On To Shadowland

Fannie and Frederick Hatton, celebrated playwrights, are now scribbling eloquent portraits and landscapes, and capturing and arranging bits of the life force for the movies. In other words, they've become photodramatists. Their initial effort, "The Land of Hope," starring Alice Brady, has just been released.

High Offer Refused

J. G. Hawks, managing editor of the Goldwyn Studios, was recently offered the Chair of Photoplay Writing in one of the country's largest universities. He refused the offer.

The Glorious Fool

"The Glorious Fool," an original photoplay by Mary Roberts Rinehart, has just been finished at Goldwyn's under the direction of E. Mason Hopper.

They All Come Back

Jeanie MacPherson and Olga Printzlau have both returned to the Hollywood Famous Players-Lasky Studio, after enjoyable vacations. Miss MacPherson has been in Europe. In Berlin she met Ernest Lubitsch, director of "Passion" and "Deception."

Contrast

A recent canvass of moving picture playhouses in the United States by the George Loane Tucker Company showed 19,966 film theaters. Ohio leads with 1,772; Pennsylvania has 1,749; New York, 1,615, and California has 679. In the rest of the world, there are only about 17,000 theaters of all types. No wonder the Yanks have a sense of humor!

Tourneur Buys "Original"

Maurice Tourneur has purchased "Coals of Fire," an original photoplay written by Malcolm Mollan.

Series of Two-Reelers

Vic Allen will write a series of two-reel Northwest Mounted Police stories for Irving Cummings as starring vehicles.

Songster Added

Jean Havez, composer of over two thousand popular songs—including "Everybody Works But Father," has been added to Harold Lloyd's scenario staff. A successful song writer surely knows the public heart, and if he masters photoplay technique should make good.

Want Original Stories

Inquiry among 28 scenario editors of west coast film companies resulted in a landslide vote favoring original stories for filming. The editors agreed that outside scenarios are in more demand than ever, while very few are coming in. The investigation was conducted by Jay Chapman of the Brunton Studios.

Nazimova's Manless Picture

From all quarters comes the rumor that Mme. Nazimova intends to produce an all-women photoplay. Nazimova is inarticulate on the subject. Perhaps she has not the ideal story for her purpose. Photodramatists, attention!

Realart Note

Harvey O'Higgins, author of "The Dummy," "The Argyle Case," and "On the Hiring Line," "Mr. Lazarus" and other famous stage successes, is working on an original photoplay for Mary Miles Minter, entitled "The Wall Flower." This is Mr. O'Higgins' first venture into the realms of photodrama. He has spent the last several months at the Realart Studio studying film technique under the direction of Supervising Director Elmer Harris, and the present story is the result of this work. Percy Heath is assisting O'Higgins in the preparation of the scenario.

Dunder Und Blitzen!

"Why insist on importing films from Germany?" asks Will Rogers. "Aren't the ones we make bad enough?"

Equivocal Title

John Emerson and Anita Loos have completed the synopsis of their new original photoplay, "Good For Nothing," for Constance Talmadge. Let us hope that in point of artistic and dramatic merit, this photoplay does not bear out the title.

Sam Rork Wins

Sam Rork has returned from Chicago, where he placed to good advantage the releases for the two-reel dramatic pictures Mr. Rork devised as a new feature for programs. He returns with a very profitable contract for all that Mr. Selig and he can make. This verifies the prophecy in the article, "The Two-Reel Renaissance," which ran in the June Photodramatist.

More Van Loan Stories

H. H. Van Loan has just sold two more original photoplays. The first of these is "The Trail of the Stars," to be used as a starring vehicle for Earle Williams. The second story, "Fightin' Mad," will star William Desmond.

Smiling Shades of Karl Marx!

It is rumored that a certain group of independent producers are planning the making of motion pictures in which the author, scenarist, director and leading players will be given a financial interest. The director and actors will take a nominal salary during production, and when the picture is sold the proceeds will be divided according to the percentages. It is anticipated that this plan will work out; it will mean greater care in keeping production costs low, an elimination of waste, and rewards in proportion to effort.

Exit the Vamp

That's the title of an original story being written for Ethel Clayton by Clara Beranger. Miss Beranger will be remembered for that sterling original, "The Gilded Lily."

New Company Leases Space

A new producing company, known as Zenith Features. Inc., has leased space at the Louis B. Mayer Studios in Hollywood and has engaged Theodore Wharton to direct its first feature, "The Besetting Sin," from an original story by Leota Morgan.

O, O, Lucille!

Marie Prevost, who is soon to begin her initial stellar production at Universal City, "The Butterfly," was glancing over the scenario in the office of her director, King Baggot, in order to get an idea of the wardrobe required for the picture. When she reached the twenty-fourth change of costume she remarked:

"Who wrote this story, 'Lucille'?"

All Signed Up

Bess Meredyth, successful photodramatist, has been signed by Louis B. Mayer. Isabelle Johnson, who provided the scenarios for several Shirley Mason pictures, has joined the Oliver Morosco scenario staff.

Equilibrium

Some well balanced staff, that scenario department of Realart. Elmer Harris was playwright and dramatic critic; Percy Heath, press agent; Alice Eyton, journalist, and Douglas Doty, editor of Cosmopolitan Magazine.



Slams and Salaams

By Our Readers

SPACE did not permit our printing this month the initial Slams and Salaams from our readers. We decided to inaugurate this department because of several criticisms of photoplays recently sent in by screen writers and students, and for many letters and brief expressions of praise and dispraise of various departments of the Photodramatist. We hope our readers will continue to offer constructive criticism of our magazine, and assure them that several suggestions by readers have been incorporated in this July number. Any errors of drama construction in current photoplays—as well as any unusually fine pieces of workmanship observed by our readers—are well worth commenting upon. Please limit your comments, however, to 200 words. Any suggestions toward combating censorship or for the progress of the motion picture art-industry, also limited to 200 words, will be printed. Names and addresses must accompany all Slams or Salaams, but we will only use initials unless permission is specifically given us to print a name and address.

My Plea

By Benedict Gorovitz

Though you believe me not,
Though you say it's rot
And just merely trite
What I write;
When it is dark
And there's not a spark
Of life to hinder my imagination,
Or give it fright
With the intruding light
Of gaudy spacious constellation,
I shall go on still,
Like the wheels of a mill,
'Till out of the millions and billions of rot
I'll produce just one thing—one noble thought!

Chinese Proverbs

Only as the Divine Spirit animates you, do you see the Divine qualities in others.

The fire of suffering can only be put out by the waters of wisdom.

Man decorates his heroes by pinning gold on their breasts. Nature, by illuminating their souls with greater life, light, truth, love, will and wisdom.

Do we know, can we ever know, how much effort to do the right was made when the wrong was committed?

Just as we have no right to pass counterfeit coins, so then we have no right to pass sickly or gloomy thoughts about.

What you see in others is not what they are, but what may be seen at the level of the mood that is animating you at the time.

Unhappiness is not the result of conditions, but of their interpretation.

Each soul in the world is God's personal ambassador. Let us treat each other as such and await the delivery of the Divine message each of us has to give.

Deal with the faults of others as gently as with your own.

Photoplays in Review

By the Staff

"Charge It"

Sada Cowan, who is under contract to write a series of original photoplays for Clara Kimball Young, has written one of the best originals in years in "Charge It;" the theme is timely, and should have the unqualified support of the League of Husbands. Miss Cowan hit the proverbial nail on the head in this exposition of the moral danger of the "charge it" habit. A more exciting plot has seldom been seen, and the characters have been realistically drawn. In the vernacular of the exhibitors: the picture has everything. Clara Kimball Young is vividly beautiful and her acting is superb. Harry Garson's direction is well nigh flawless. The picture is invested with rich settings, and the photography is clear and sharp. The eternal triangle is made interesting and convincing—the complexes and reflexes of the improvident wife being revealed with a fine realism that will thrill audiences everywhere.

Synopsis—The story opens contrasting two married couples. One twain, a middle aged man with plenty of money, and a pretty, young wife, are living a false, hectic existence. He indulges her every fancy, and buys her anything and everything. She repays his devotion by engaging in a passionate affair with a handsome young clubman whose motto is: "Play the married women—they're safer."

The other couple, Philip and Julia Lawrence, are young, idealistic, co-operative; life for them is as unrippled and romantic as a sunny southern sea. They chance to become acquainted with Tom and Millie Gareth—the old fellow and his young wife—and are invited by them to join a country club. There they meet the young and wealthy clubman, Dana Herrick, who is of course secretly pursuing his illicit affair with Millie. Mrs. Lawrence looks with envy at Millie's fine clothes and tasteful coiffure. Millie's husband, taking quite a liking to Phillip Lawrence, gives him an inside tip on the oil market.

Phillip begins to make money in oil, and is soon swimming on a wave of prosperity that seems to rise higher and higher. Julia becomes chummy with Millie, and from her acquires the "charge-it" mania. Before long, she is spending money faster than Philip can make it, and the storm clouds begin to gather.

In the meantime, Dana Herrick tries to make love to Julia, and Phillip mistakingly believes she encourages Dana's attentions. A terrific row ensues between the young couple, kindled by his stating that he has cancelled all her charge accounts. Phillip tells Julia to go to Dana, assuring her that she won't be interfered with. Entering Dana's apartment, she is astonished to find Millie there. Millie accuses her of trying to steal Dana! Insulted and shamed, Julia leaves. Her pride is too badly hurt and she does not return to her husband. Dana's valet has been an eye-witness to the whole sordid scene between Dana, Millie and Julia.

All this time, Phillip is thinking his action over, and slightly repentent, decides to go to Dana's apartment and bring her back. When he knocks at the door, Dana quickly hides Millie Gareth. As Phillip enters the room, his eyes fall on a corsage bouquet—by a strange coincidence Millie and Mrs. Lawrence had worn similar bouquets! When Dana tells Phillip that his wife is not there, Philip calls him a liar. A strenuous fist fight ensues, in which Phillip gives Dana a terrible beating. However, Phillip's search of the house reveals the fact that his wife is not there. He thinks she has escaped somehow.

Phillip does not find his wife anywhere, and afterwards feels very disconsolate when he learns from Dana's valet that his wife *had* scorned Dana. In the meantime, Julia goes to another city, where a series of misfortunes finally results in her working as a hat check girl in a hotel cafe. A year or so elapses, then Phillip—who is developing a chain of retail stores, goes on a business trip to the city where Julia is working out her destiny. By chance, he meets Mr. and Mrs. Gareth, and all go to dinner at the "hotel." On his way out, Phillip is about to "tip" the pretty hat-check girl, when he looks up at her and—of course, a reconciliation follows.

"The Ghost in the Garret"

Here is an original photoplay by Wells Hastings that is beyond question one of the best comedy dramas of 1921. It is designed for the sole purpose of amusing an audience. It fulfills its mission remarkably well and is therefore an interesting example of the kind of story for which there is always a good demand. To amuse an audience is quite as difficult a task as to make a profound emotional appeal to it. And, as a general rule, it pays the author who can accomplish the task somewhat better.

The story is, moreover, an example of a very trite plot basis given a decided new twist of treatment. We have all seen, of course, pictures in which the villain dropped the stolen jewels in the innocent heroine's pocket and accused her of the theft. But what follows this rather conventional situation in the present story is new and unusual and thoroughly amusing. Twists of treatment of this kind, new developments of old and familiar ideas, are often more effective and more entertaining than downright originality. There is a definite dramatic law to the effect, which might be stated somewhat as follows: "Start a story with something that your audience recognizes, and then surprise them with a new twist that is completely unexpected but entirely logical and natural."

Synopsis—Delsie O'Dell, the unwelcome niece of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Dennison, arrives at their country home, accompanied by Violet, her bulldog, who promptly begins eating up the rug. Her visit grows a little more enjoyable for her,

however, when she meets Bill Clark, Dennison's secretary, who falls in love with her.

One night after Bill and she have dressed for a Hallowe'en party, she hears Violet growling from upstairs. Oscar White, a suspicious friend of the family, is searching Mrs. Dennison's room for some valuable pearls. Delsie enters, drops some paste pearls, by accident, and Oscar, believing these are the real ones, takes them. He is stopped before leaving the house by Dennison. Oscar manages to drop the pearls into Delsie's pocket. They are discovered and she is banished from the house.

Delsie follows him to an old "haunted" house which she discovers is the abode of a gang of thieves. She hides in an old chest, and begins mystifying the inmates. She makes rapid progress through the house, trying to dodge them, and hiding under linen covered furniture. Delsie then turns into a ghost. The men take to drink in their terror, and are afraid to come near her. She manages to get the pearls and to get a message to Dennison who notifies the police, and she is saved—for Bill.

"The Gilded Lily"

"The Gilded Lily" was written directly for the screen by Clara Beranger, and is one of the most novel and original stories screened in the last several years. It is distinctive in theme, plot and characterization; it is indeed refreshing to finally see a photoplay in which the city chap excels the country bumpkin in point of chivalry and nobility of character. The theme of a cabaret dancer's regeneration is in itself hackneyed, but in its development throughout the plot Miss Beranger evidences the highest technical skill and sense of values. The anti-climax is cleverly conceived, rivalling in its element of surprise the famed O. Henry style. The Paramount people have Miss Beranger to thank in great measure for the box-office success of this photoplay, as Mae Murray is hardly convincing in the "lily" role, being more of a sensuous pink rose. Of course, Miss Murray is ever an aesthetic delight, as she has a most exquisite physique and wears few clothes; however, as she is appearing in a photoplay rather than in an art gallery, she would be much more "convincing" if more adequately clothed. Also, she misses entirely when essaying the exalted or "spirituelle" gaze.

However, our hats off to Clara Beranger; with so splendid a vehicle, it would be a sorry star and director who couldn't achieve an excellent motion picture production.

Synopsis—Lillian Drake, known as "The Lily," is hostess of the Cafe Royal, a rich private club. She is a typical Broadway salamander. She gets all she can from men but gives nothing but encouragement. Creighton Howard and John Stewart, are typical men about town, and Frank Thompson, a country boy, who has come to the city for his first sip of its intoxicating gaieties.

Thompson, who is engaged to a girl in his home town, is infatuated with Lily. He proposes marriage and she accepts him. She gives up her place at the club and redecorates her apartments that they may be in keeping with the quiet life she hopes to lead, but he makes it plain that it was her gilded life that he wanted, not the woman's heart. She promises to go back to the fleshpots with him.

The next day while dressed in her gayest, Frank Thompson's mother surprises her and offers her money to break the engagement with Frank. Angered by the mother's attitude she vows to do all she can to hold Frank.

She plunges back into the old life with all her vigor and returns to the Cafe Royal. She dances and collapses on the floor. Howard takes her home—not to a gorgeous apartment, but to his own white haired mother's home!

"The Last Card"

"The Last Card" was adapted by Molly Parro from Maxwell Smith's story "Dated" which ran in the Saturday Evening Post. The photoplay has aroused a storm of comment, as Bayard Veiller, the director, has upset all the traditions of the cinema by reverting to the stage mode of presentation. After the cast of characters is flashed, the play proceeds in a sequence of dramatic acts and scenes. There are neither close-ups nor long shots, as during the making of "The Last Card" the camera was always in the same proximity as an audience to the players. There are of course no cut-backs either.

One might as well be witnessing a stage play as the screen version of "The Last Card." Subtitles—and they're very tense and well placed—are almost all of the spoken type. The story is in logical dramatic sequence, moving forward to a powerful climax and natural denoument. It is one of the very few convincing mystery photodramas I have ever seen, despite the fact that the plot is evolved from the trite situation of the innocent man arrested for murder. However, the handling of suspense and the introduction of humorous relief, plus a number of finely drawn psychological "touches," has rendered an unusually excellent photoplay. "The Last Card" is free from sloppy sentiment, its elements of pathos being genuine. The theme is that of a wife's ingenuity in attempting to clear her husband of the charge of murder by a series of deductions which will automatically reveal the murderer.

However, I believe the photoplay loses the more fluid, expansive character which it has borrowed from the novel, as well as the poetizing, vitalizing stimulus of nature, in being presented with the limitations and the artificiality of the stage. Mr. Veiller has achieved an unusually fine photoplay, but it will always be a question as to whether "The Last Card," with its basic story elements, would not have been presented to better advantage according to modern cinema production theory. "The Miracle Man" as a stage play was surely mediocre; transferred intact to the screen, it would have never caused a ripple. The long shots of the crowds hastening to the aged healer's humble home in the hills, and the close-ups of that divinely eloquent face, did not impede the drama in "The Miracle Man;" the allegory in "Don't Change Your Husband" surely beautified that production, a cinema work of art from any standpoint.

Synopsis—Tom Gannell, one of the shrewdest criminal lawyers in the country, returns home from a short business trip a day sooner than he expected. Dashing up the front steps in his impatience to greet his beautiful wife, Emma, he is dumbfounded to see her silhouetted in the glass door in a man's embrace. He recognizes the masculine shadow as that of Sorley, a college student who tends his furnace.

When Gannell enters, calm prevails. A sound is heard of Sorley descending the stairs to the cellar. To prevent his wife seeing his intense emotion, the husband leaves the room, and rush-

ing upstairs, hears his wife playing "The End of a Perfect Day," on the piano.

His wife's faithlessness, her callousness in calmly playing such a piece of music after her conduct, crazes Gannell, and knowing that Sorley must now be in the cellar of the Kirkwood home, next door, he enters the latter's basement and accosts the astounded Sorley.

Gannell can no longer contain himself, as he looks at the grinning Sorley. An axe is near and, quickly seizing it, Gannell delivers a crushing, fatal blow. This act accomplished, he quietly returns to his home.

The next day the Kirkwoods leave for their annual trip to Florida. Upon their return, Ralph Kirkwood is startled to learn that he is accused of the murder of Sorley, the finger of guilt pointing to him by reason of his coat and one of his favorite brand of cigarettes being found near the body. Ralph goes to the police station to explain matters, and is promptly clapped into jail.

When Ralph's wife, Elsie, hears of the charge against her husband she loses no time in trying to prove Ralph's innocence by showing that the coat was stolen the preceding winter, and that the box of cigarettes bore a date subsequent to the murder. But the alibi fails.

In a flash of inspiration, she telephones Gannell to come over to her house for a talk. She also asks the chief of police to be present and listen to the conversation. Her maid, Katie, is told to listen, and on a certain signal, a cough, to play "The End of a Perfect Day." Her son, Freddie, is to remain in the cellar, and upon hearing something drop on the floor, to rattle the furnace handle.

Gannell makes his appearance. Elsie carefully seats him near the telephone, which has been "fixed" so that the connection is open, though the receiver is on the hook. As Katie starts playing "The End of a Perfect Day," Gannell becomes agitated. "Stop it! Stop it!" he moans. He dashes towards the room whence the music came, only to find the piano bench empty. Suddenly he hears the rattling of the furnace handle. Breaking down, he confesses his part in the crime.

"Sheltered Daughters"

Again Clara Beranger scores with a fine "original" in "Sheltered Daughters," written expressly as a starring vehicle for Justine Johnstone. With a theme timely and pertinent, several interesting characterizations, and a plot that is suspenseful, Miss Beranger has evolved a tense, vital photodrama. Those who appreciate a photoplay with a message will welcome this story of a girl brought up in ignorance by a father whose mistaken idealism has caused him to withhold the facts of life from her. This photoplay proves that the ignorant or so-called innocent type of girl is not safe, in A. D. 1921. The climax of "Sheltered Daughters" is terrifying in its significance, and is by no means artificially built up, being approached through a series of incidents that are natural and in logical sequence. And the story ends, as all life-like stories must end, at the threshold of new experiences.

Synopsis—Jim Dark, most reliable and distinguished member of the plain clothes department of the New York police force, and in constant touch with crime and criminals, has made up his mind that his motherless little daughter shall be shielded from all knowledge of evil. He does not even permit her to read the newspapers, lest her pure mind be shocked by the sordid stories she would read.

So Jenny grows up in a world of dreams and books. Her favorite dream is that she is a descendant of Jeanne d'Arc, the Maid of France.

Jenny has a school friend, Adele, whose father likewise has determined to shelter his daughter. But Adele, a gay and flighty little person, finds no pleasure in books and solitude, and since her father forbids her to entertain any young people in their home, Adele goes out on the streets in search of friendship and amusement.

Thus she scrapes acquaintance with the first young men who are attracted by her youthful charms, and gaily enters upon what seems to be a very innocent little street corner and soda fountain flirtation. Both of her new "friends" are crooks.

Adele's father learns of her dining alone at a restaurant with one of these vicious youths, and turns her out of the house. Thereupon Adele gaily hunts herself a job in a smart modiste's shop and prepares to enjoy her new-found freedom to the full.

Then she meets Jenny on the street one day, tells her all about her job, her independence, and the pretty clothes she handles in the shop and will some day be rich enough to wear herself. She takes Jenny to the shop to see if she also cannot secure a job.

Soon another sheltered daughter is wearing fine clothes and walking on the perilous edge of an international scandal. When Jim Dark makes an important raid one day he finds his innocent little daughter in company with a notorious crook! Just in time is the girl saved from the results of the pitiful ignorance in which she had been reared.

The story ends with a possible romance budding between Jenny and a manly, clean-cut young newspaper reporter who vows to be her guide and protector as long as she'll have him around.



LITERARY production is about nineteen laps behind film production. Someone is selling original photoplays. It might as well be you.



COWARDS die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once.—*Shakespeare.*

Questions Answered

Concerning the Writing of Photoplays

Q.—How can I gauge the length of a detailed synopsis for five reels? So often I cut and pare, only to find too much that should be there has been removed, and it makes me "paniky." I am ready to believe that I am unable to recognize a crisis when I see one!—F. C. H.

A.—Is it not a fact that you have given too much attention to petty details, excessive dialogue, or treated too largely of incidents that have no real bearing upon your plot structure? This is generally the case when a detailed synopsis becomes too lengthy. Visualize the *action* and important *situations* or *crises* in your story and it is hardly likely that you will find that you have spent too much time and embodied too many words in this direction. You will probably find that you have such a dearth of important situations that your story is largely narrative. If you find that you have a strong, novel plot basis and the proper number of situations or crises, and that all your material relates to the *actions* of your characters, why worry about the length of your detailed synopsis—you will not find the scenario editors in any way antagonistic under such conditions.

Q.—I have a great dread of spending a lot of time creating an effort that is too utterly time worn and hackneyed in its basic situation to be attractive. What is the best way to avoid this?—L. S. F.

A.—No situation is really too time worn or hackneyed to be treated with novelty. Some of them are undoubtedly very difficult to handle in a new and entertaining manner. One of these we believe nearly every writer uses at some time or another in his or her career. This situation is technically known as "Situation Thirty-five—Recovery of a Lost One." This situation is generally used in stories wherein the child is kidnaped and in later years meets the parent under more or less dramatic circumstances. The parent recognizes the child by means of a locket or dimple or in some other "sure fire" manner and then exclamations of "My child!" "My mother!" are in order. Most beginners believe that by varying the means of identification sufficient novelty will be attained. Beware of this one. Another situation which has had overwhelming use is known as "Situation Eighteen—Involuntary Crimes of Love." This situation is often portrayed in conjunction with the first situation mentioned and involves the idea that the brother unknowingly falls in love with the long lost sister, or vice versa, or the father with the long lost daughter. Constant study of the screen and the trade journals, and avoidance of plots that come "too easy" are some of the best means of avoiding hackneyed situations.

Q.—I have been told that my story has an "anti-climax." I am not quite clear as to this.—Mrs. F. L. D.

A.—The affliction under which your story is suffering is similar in many ways to the human vermiform appendix—it is not necessary and may do a lot of harm; therefore, "cut it out." An anti-climax involves a situation or crisis that follows the true climax and yet one which is not as strong as the logical climax. After the objectives of your heroic characters have been attained in the final great dramatic situation, or climax, it is not well to sustain the action to any degree thereafter. Bring the story to a quick and satisfactory conclusion. Study your plot structure again and you will no doubt find that the anti-climax is caused through erroneous development.

Q.—Is it well to place the name of the "star" you have in mind when writing your story in the cast of characters?—L. J.

A.—No—it might have a tendency to limit the market on your story to this one particular player, whereas the story might fit any one of a dozen studio leads.

Q.—Is it a good idea to set aside a certain hour or two a day to do my writing, or is it better to await moments of inspiration?—Miss R. D.

A.—We believe if you will systematize your work and determine to spend a certain time each day to your writing it will be a wonderful help. Spend this time in visualization and endeavor, even though you may develop no ideas to work on. Gradually your subconscious mind will so respond to this demand made upon it that you will find your best attention and inspiration attained at this certain specified time. This will not necessitate your overlooking ,of course, those moments of inspiration of which you speak.



My friend, have you heard of the town of Yawn
  On the banks of the River Slow,
Where blooms the Wait-Awhile flower fair,
  And the soft Go-Easies grow?
It lies in the valley of What's-the-Use,
  In the province of Let-Her-Slide,
That old Tired Feeling is native there;
  It's the home of the listless I-Don't-Care,
Where the Put-It-Offs abide.

Hints from the Studios

Compiled by Alfred A. Cohn and Kate Corbaley of the Palmer Sales Department

Business Girl Romance—One of the first rank producers is very anxious to look at an "original" dealing with the social problems of a young and pretty girl who finds herself, through her enterprise, more than able to compete with her male business competitors.

Early Years of Marriage—There are too few stories written or filmed touching upon this phase of existence. One of our most popular young feminine stars has often asked for a story which would begin at the altar and travel the road of the first years of struggle—for a home, for mutual understanding, for mutual faithfulness, for mental and spiritual growth.

Reincarnation—Some one is going to realize a small fortune through taking advantage of a timely theme and writing a photoplay which adopts this theory—a theory recurring persistently throughout recorded history. It was lightly touched upon in "Buried Treasure," itself so mediocre a photoplay, however, as to count for naught. One of our greatest studio photodramatists is today pondering a story of reincarnation, and the studio with which she is connected would readily accept and pay well for a powerful story. The theory which is in itself consoling and which attempts to justify the apparent inequalities of life by asserting a chain of earth-lives in which the soul gains experiences, has found expression in Europe and America through the New Thought and Theosophical movements. It is deeply rooted in the metaphysics of the Orient, and is accepted—although in some cases only theoretically—by about two-thirds of the human race. The popularity of "Earthbound" as a photoplay was unquestionably due to the current interest in spiritism and psychical research; "The Miracle Man" scored so heavily because it touched upon another deeply rooted human aspiration, that of becoming whole through belief in infinite goodness—the basic doctrine of Christian Science; both themes are timely. A screen story based on reincarnation and its corollary, karma, in which a man who loved a woman and was jilted by her two thousand years ago would meet her again in a modern environment—in which she would suffer the torments of an unreciprocated love for him—should prove of interest. Of course, only the audience could be let in on the fact that the two souls were again contacting, as—theoretically—Time would have blurred all definite memory. Even so, the two could have an uncanny intuition that they had met before. If any screen writer should attempt this type of story, it would be advisable to make the anterior life episode brief, and fashion the main drama around the modern episode. India, Egypt, Greece, Babylon: all could be used as locales for the anterior life incidents. Do not use any of the stock phraseology or terminology of any sect or cult, nor make your story either dogmatic or didactic.

Unique Romance—One of the studio scenario editors recently conversed at length on the subject of a "successful" romance of two young people whose previous environment, viewpoints, and experiences had been entirely different. Since then the following basic idea—it has not been imparted to said editor nor to anyone else prior to this publication—has suggested itself: A young girl of an ethereal type, arrives at the age of eighteen knowing nothing of the sordidness of the world, because of having had private tutors and having grown up keyed to Sanskrit, Beethoven, and the love of mountains, lakes, stars and other aspects of nature. She meets a young fellow whose soul is attuned to sporting pages, wine parties, wild women, jazz music, and brilliantly lighted thoroughfares. . . . . Can you march on?

Italian—An unusually beautiful feminine star would like a story with an Italian locale. Producers very anxious for this type, as she is ideally suited for it.

Sea Stories—As suggested in the June Photodramatist, tales of the sea, if not morbid or too tragic, are marketable. The American public is not as yet ready to part with its illusions. They prefer idealism to realism—aspirations to actuality. By the American public, we here refer to the

movie-going public; they insist on virtue triumphing, and after all, that's in accord with the nation's sustained optimism—even if it is based on Pollyannaism or adequately represented in Orison Swett Marden. As a formula for a sea story, we would suggest: the atmosphere or backgrounds of Conrad, the virile characters of Jack London, and your own novel theme and plot.

Two Reelers—The man who can put into sequential pictorial terms what de Mauppasant, Kipling, O. Henry, Leonard Merrick and a few others have put into the written word—in fact, the man who can approach their bare plots even if he can't match their manner of treatment, is going to find a ready welcome. The two reeler parallels in many respects the short story, and just as the short story is America's favorite literary pabulum, just so will the two reel photoplay become a favorite screen diet.

Plagiarism—The man who deliberately steals a story, who consciously sets down a synopsis that he has lifted from some work of fiction or photodrama, is guilty of an unpardonable offense. He not only jeopardizes his whole future standing as a literateur or photodramatist, but is apt to seriously inconvenience and embarrass some agency that is handling his efforts. Anyone, after reading thousands of stories, and having them pass through the alembic of his brain, is apt to unconsciously reproduce a situation—but never a complete work! It is a breach of ethics that can cost a serious suit for damages—and future disbarment.

The Photoplay Market

Supplied exclusively to The Photodramatist by the Sales Department of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation.

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Owing to the frequent changes in studio personnel, no addresses of the stars are given herewith. Full information may be obtained by addressing Photoplay Sales Department, Palmer Photoplay Corporation, Los Angeles, California.

This agency, being in close daily contact with studios and market conditions, is equipped to obtain quicker and more satisfactory results than the free-lance photodramatist can obtain for himself. Long experience has proved the superiority of the reliable marketing bureau. Furthermore, it will be found that some of the producing organizations do not maintain reading staffs, and will return manuscripts unread. They do, however, in almost every instance, consider manuscripts submitted to them by recognized agencies, for they know that such scripts have had a careful reading, possibly a revision, and are of a type suited to their requirements.

FIVE-REEL DRAMA —FEMALE LEAD

May Allison
Theda Bara
Betty Blythe
Alice Brady
Alice Calhoun
Catherine Calvert
Ora Carew
Irene Castle
Helen Chadwick
Mildred Harris Chaplin
Naomi Childers
Ethel Clayton
Betty Compson
Viola Dana
Marion Davies
Priscilla Dean
Eleanor Faire
Elsie Ferguson
Pauline Frederick
Lillian Gish
Corinne Griffith
Vera Gordon
Edith Hallor
Elaine Hammerstein
Juanita Hansen
Wanda Hawley
Alice Joyce
Alice Lake
Florence Lawrence
Louise Lovely
Katherine MacDonald
Vivian Martin
Mae Marsh
May McAvoy
Mary Miles Minter
Carmel Myers
Alla Nazimova
Eva Novak
Jean Paige
Eileen Percy
Mary Pickford
Dorothy Phillips
Ruby de Remer
Florence Reed
Irene Rich
Edith Roberts
Ruth Roland
Teddy Sampson
Gloria Swanson
Mabel Julienne Scott
Eileen Sedgwick
Anita Stewart
Blanche Sweet
Norma Talmadge
Rosemary Theby
Florence Vidor
Gladys Walton
Lois Weber
Pearl White
Clara Kimball Young

FIVE-REEL DRAMA —MALE LEAD

John Barrymore
Lionel Barrymore
Hobart Bosworth
William Desmond
Elliott Dexter
William Farnum
Sessue Hayakawa
Gareth Hughes
Lloyd Hughes
Thomas Jefferson
J. Warren Kerrigan
James Kirkwood
Montague Love
Bert Lytell
Frank Mayo
Thomas Meighan
Owen Moore
Tom Moore
Antonio Moreno
Harry Myers
Eugene O'Brien
Tyrone Power
Joe Rahn
Charles Ray
William Russell
Joe Ryan
Milton Sills
Conway Tearle
H. B. Warner

FIVE-REEL COMEDY-DRAMA —FEMALE LEAD

May Allison
Billie Burke
June Caprice
Marguerite Clark
Viola Dana
Bebe Daniels
Dorothy Gish
Wanda Hawley
Justine Johnson
Mollie King
Doris May
Mary Miles Minter
Mary Pickford
Constance Talmadge

FIVE-REEL COMEDY-DRAMA —MALE LEAD

Roscoe Arbuckle
Douglas Fairbanks
Carter de Haven
Johnny Jones
Douglas MacLean
Tom Moore
Charles Ray
Wallace Reid
Bryant Washburn

FIVE-REEL COMEDY

Charlie Chaplin
Max Linder
Charles Murray
Kala Pasha
Ben Turpin

FIVE-REEL WESTERN

Art Acord
Harry Carey
Lester Cuneo
William Duncan
Jack Drum
Ray Gallagher
Neal Hart
Jack Hoxie
Tom Mix
Pete Morrison
Antonio Moreno
Will Rogers
Tom Santchi
Russell Simpson

THREE-REEL COMEDY

Harold Lloyd

TWO-REEL COMEDY —FEMALE LEAD

Vioria Daniel
Dorothy Devore
Louise Fazenda
Phyllis Haver
Irene Hunt
Pearl Shepard
Edna Shipman

TWO-REEL COMEDY —MALE LEAD

Jimmie Adamas
Alexander Alt
Jimmy Aubrey
Monty Banks
George Bunny
Charlie Chaplin
Chester Conklin
Clyde Cook
Bud Duncan
Neely Edwards
Harry Gribben
Lloyd Hamilton
Ham Hamilton
Buster Keaton
Jack Livingston
Harold Lloyd
Hank Mann
Harry McCoy
Lee Moran
Charles Murray
Kala Pasha
Larry Semon
Sid Smith
Ford Sterling
Harry Swett
Ben Turpin
Bobbie Vernon
Jack White
Leo White

TWO-REEL WESTERN —FEMALE LEAD

Josephine Hill
Helen Holmes
Fritzie Ridgway

TWO-REEL WESTERN —MALE LEAD

Art Acord
F. Braidwood
William Fairbanks
C. E. Hatton
J. B. Warner

ONE-REEL COMEDY

Ida Allen
Eddie Boland
Billy Fletcher
Gaylord Lloyd
Harry Mann
George Ovey
Snub Pollard
Harry Pollard
Rex Story

SERIAL

Ann Little
Ruth Roland
Antonio Moreno
Eddie Polo
William Russell



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Perhaps you could

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The industry faces the most serious shortage of photoplays in its history. It needs, and will liberally pay for, 2,000 good scenarios. Not mere ideas, not patchworks of incident and action, but connected, workable stories for the screen. It is because the studios cannot obtain sufficient good material that so many thousands of patrons are criticising so many of the pictures shown.

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The Palmer Photopay Corporation is primarily an agency for the sale of photoplays to producers. Its Department of Education is a training school for scenario writers—a school that selects its students through the test applied by this questionnaire. Unless new writers are trained there will be no scenarios for us to sell, nor plays for the studios to produce.

In the three years of its existence the Palmer Corporation has trained many scenario writers and sold many of their photoplays. You have sat spellbound in your theatre and witnessed the work of Palmer students which was written in farm houses, city flats, and mining camps.

And the same studios that produced and paid for those pictures have rejected scenarios submitted by novelists and magazine writers whose names are known wherever the language is spoken.

The acquired art of fine writing cannot be transferred to the screen. But the native gifts, creative imagination and dramatic instinct—which means vivid story telling—are the life and the soul of the motion picture industry. Trained to express themselves in the language of the screen, these gifts are priceless to their possessor.

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It is a simple test which you can apply to yourself in your own home.

YOU ARE INVITED TO APPLY OUR TEST TO YOURSELF

We will gladly send you the Palmer questionnaire upon request. Answer, to the best of your ability, the questions in it, and we will tell you frankly what the record reveals to us.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation cannot endow you nor any other person with creative imagination; it cannot impart dramatic insight. But if you have a natural inclination toward these essential elements of photoplay writing, it can be discovered through the questionnaire; and through the Course and Service your talent can be trained in the technique of scenario writing. And it can be done by home study at low cost.

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Please send me, without cost or obligation on my part, your questionnaire. I will answer the questions in it and return it to you for analysis. If I pass the test, I am to receive further information about your Course and Service.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

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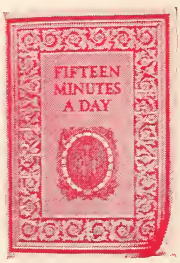
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THE PHOTODRAMATIST

V.3 NO.3

AUGUST
1921
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Read How Three Students Won
The $5000.00 Scenario Contest

The PHOTODRAMATIST

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The September Number

Will contain articles by Benjamin B. Hampton, Bryan Irvine, L. Hervey Parker, Marshall Neilan, Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, James R. Quirk, G. Harrison Wiley and Earl Percy, an Associated Producers' Symposium with an introduction by George Landy; and further Conversation as overheard and set down by Beverly Glenn.

SCENARIO MARKET

Hot Tips on Urgent Needs of the Studios

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Official Organ of the Screen Writers' Guild
of the Authors' League of America

The PHOTODRAMATIST



The Changing World

By Frank E. Woods

"We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself in our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the Old of the New World's worth:
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth."
—*Arthur O'Shaughnessy*



THE photodramatist enters the great cosmic drama in keeping with the Infinite Plan; he will be, in the expanse of days to come, a master of new values in art, science, philosophy, religion.

From the fastnesses of the invisible world of Thought, fulgurous forces of the very essence of Beauty are sweeping into his consciousness, attracted by the human desire for more complete expression.

Today the photodramatist is toiling away in the lowlands of Art; tomorrow this Titan will stand with his peers on Mount Olympus; old traditions and conventions and standards of art are fast crumbling wherever he now walks.

He is the Apostle of Democracy, telling his dreams and hopes and fears to a Universe—rather than to a selected audience of friends. It has taken many of us a long time to recognize his high purpose, his intrinsic worth.

In fact, in his own Art he has been submerged, unrecognized, unknown to the great public which has sat enrapt throughout the interpretation of his stories. Actors, directors, financiers: all these have first had their day.

We are living in a world that is changing almost kaleidoscopically, but if we may reach for one live fact from the past of our Eternity—we find that the greater plays and the masterpieces of music are monuments to creative, not interpretive genius. We remember Shakespeare, while forgetting Booth; we still listen to Beethoven, Bach, Brahms—accounting their interpreters mere volatile instruments which through the centuries reproduce their sublime symphonies and melodies.

The springing into existence of The Screen Writers' Guild is of considerable significance. It has come to band together these artists of a New Order into a protective, fraternal kinship—that in union they may be conscious of their power and purpose.

As the photodramatist is recognized as a potent factor in the art expression of the future, he will be emulated—as are authors, sculptors, composers, today. As the creator of photoplays, he will be well compensated—the laborer always being worthy of his hire. And he will attract to him the Great Artists, the Great Lovers, the Great Beautifiers from all the highways and byways of Life—those who will objectify his dreams.



In Addition to the Plot

By Vera Gordon

The famous mother in "Humoresque"

THE very first motion picture with which I was associated taught me the importance of those factors in a film which are in addition to the plot. That picture was "Humoresque"; it marked not only my own screen debut, but also it was the first story of Fannie Hurst's to be filmed. In fact, my connection with it came through Miss Hurst, since it was at her insistence that I was engaged, while in mid-ocean, by wireless, to create the role of Mama Kantor. I had once appeared in one of her plays, "The Land of the Free," and she was kind enough to remember my work and to secure my engagement in "Humoresque." It was not only my performance that Miss Hurst remembered, but also the assistance I was able to give to the producer of the play in putting on that production. And it was because she realized the importance of the atmospheric background and surroundings of the plot of "Humoresque" that the authoress prevailed upon the producers of the film to have me portray Mama Kantor—a far more important role than is usually entrusted to a screen novice, even with the long and varied experience I had had on the speaking stage here and abroad.

So it was, therefore, that for six full weeks after my arrival in New York I collaborated with Director Frank Borzage on the selection and preparation of this atmosphere before a single foot of film was taken. Together we looked over literally thousands of "extras" and players of small parts who were applying for work in this picture. Together we ransacked dozens of shops in immigrant neighborhoods and visited scores of families on the lower East Side of New York, Brooklyn and the Bronx, to find the "props" for the settings of the picture. Everywhere we went, too, we had our eyes open for types to put into the picture—even though they had never done any screen work at all. Always, also, we were on the lookout for striking interiors to be reproduced in the production.

Never for a moment would I decry the primary importance of the plot itself as the first requirement for a worth-while photoplay; nor the equal importance of the actors' characterizations as the second requirement for success. I have had too much experience in stage plays—and in pictures—to make any such statement. But the tertiary importance of atmosphere, of all those living persons and inanimate objects that make up what I group together "in addition to the plot"—there is another fundamental which every scenario writer should study carefully and inject into his work.

Do not be too brief in your scenario—clothe the skeleton of plot with as vivid description as you are capable of writing. Describe in detail the pictures in which you set the actions of your players; set the stage, so to speak, in words. Then the director can translate your descriptions on to the films far more adequately and accurately. You know these settings and surroundings intimately—you must know them that way to people them with the characters of your story. Why entrust the skeleton of your plot, therefore, to the already overworked director and his assistants or to the property man, carpenters and other studio mechanics? Take a little longer, expend more pains to "dress" your story, and you will find that the results will more than justify the extra effort.

The directorial staff will be able to concentrate on the drama; the technical staff will meet more exactly your suggestions on sets and props; the players will feel more in the spirit of the scene and will thus give their best characterizations. Your story will have been created in the films, imperishably, realistically and artistically—and that's what every scenario writer wants.

The Guild Forum

A monthly department devoted to the interests of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America, the official organization of recognized photodramatists and studio staff writers.

By Alfred Hustwick

OFFICERS FOR 1921-22

Frank E. Woods, President.

June Mathis, Vice-President.

Eugene Presbrey, Treasurer and Executive Secretary.

Dwight Cleveland, Recording Secretary.

Executive Committee

The officers and Thompson Buchanan, Elmer Harris, A. S. LeVino, Jeanie MacPherson, Frederick Palmer, Elmer Rice, Rob Wagner.

Council

Ruth Ann Baldwin	E. Percy Heath
Thompson Buchanan	Lucien Hubbard
Dwight Cleveland	Charles Kenyon
Jack Cunningham	Frederick Palmer
Marion Fairfax	Sir Gilbert Parker
Elmer Harris	Rob Wagner

Newly elected, to serve until July, 1924.

Julia Crawford Ivers	June Mathis
Monte Katterjohn	Bernard McConville
A. S. LeVino	Mary H. O'Connor
Eugene B. Lewis	George Pyper
Jeanie MacPherson	Eugene W. Presbrey

To serve until July, 1922.

Luther Reed	Rex Taylor
Elmer Rice	Bayard Veiller
Edna Schley	Frank E. Woods
Doris Schroeder	Waldermar Young

To serve until July, 1923.

Committees

Grievance and Ethics, Eugene Presbrey, Chairman.

Copyright and Registration, Frederick Palmer, Chairman.

Censorship and Publicity, Rob Wagner, Chairman.

Membership, Jeanie MacPherson, Chairman.

Finance, Elmer Harris, Chairman.

Legal, Elmer Rice, Chairman.

Library, A. S. LeVino, Chairman.

Clubhouse Committee, Thompson Buchanan, Chairman.

Clubhouse Sub-committees

House, A. S. LeVino, Chairman.
Entertainment, Marion Fairfax, Chairman.
Membership, Jeanie MacPherson, Chairman.
Finance, Elmer Harris, Chairman.

The executive committee meets every Wednesday at the clubhouse at 8 p. m. The Council meets the first Wednesday in each month at 8 p. m.

Full Speed Ahead

Those members who did not drop in for council meeting on July 20th will be eager to hear how the election of officers resulted. Well, Frank E. Woods was elected president by acclamation to succeed Thompson Buchanan. It's a foregone conclusion on the writer's part that this selection will meet with the wholehearted endorsement of the members generally. Mr. Woods has been second to none in the work of making the Guild a success, and particularly in the creation and operation of the holding company which has made the clubhouse possible. Following the record of the energetic Mr. Buchanan, the new president has a high standard to equal, but those who have kept intimate touch with his activities as a member of the executive committee feel confident that "F. E. W." will successfully pilot the Guild to greater prosperity and increased prestige.

Before relinquishing the president's chair to his successor Mr. Buchanan was made the recipient of a sterling silver inkwell from his associates on the executive committee in recognition of sterling services. The spirit of appreciation evidenced in this present was high proof of the excellent understanding which has always marked the endeavors of the past president and his aides.

The officers who will conduct the Guild's affairs in the new year, and who were also elected by acclamation, are all experienced in the work of the organization and can be counted upon to devote themselves wholeheartedly to furthering its interests. They are, June Mathis, vice-president, formerly chairman of the finance committee; Eugene W. Presbrey, treasurer and executive secretary, and Dwight Cleveland, recording secretary.

The year that now begins will demand much of the new president, officers and committees. Perusal of the complete list appended to this article will convince our members that Mr. Woods will be efficiently

assisted and that the close of the Guild's second year, and the first year of The Writers, will find both the organization and its club on a sound basis—but, of course, the measure of success attained will depend chiefly upon the amount of loyal co-operation that the officers will receive from each and every member. To make this co-operation more effective several committees have been consolidated and their membership increased so that practically every resident member of the Guild will have part in carrying on its work.

It is important that each individual contribute his best effort to make the year successful. The biggest assets of the Guild and The Writers are—well, Sir Gilbert Parker, whose experience entitles him to speak with authority, summed it all up in a remark to the writer: "The Guild is a wonderful organization. It has the three things necessary to success—individuality, ability, and *enthusiasm.*"

Our First Birthday

The first birthday party to the screen's most precocious infant has taken its place in history, and unless present signs and omens are worthless, it is a very important place, indeed. With the record of the first year's activities as a basis of prophecy it is reasonable to predict that the Screen Writers' Guild will soon rank with the greatest of those organizations which have, from time to time, been called into existence by the progress of all the arts.

The Guild's membership list is already a roster of creative minds devoted to advancing the art of the motion picture.

All of which was made perfectly clear at the annual meeting and dinner held at the clubhouse on July 14th.

Since nearly all our members were present at the dinner it is scarcely necessary to review in detail the events of that happy occasion. The dinner itself was a credit to the Guild, to the caterer, and to the members who had charge of the arrangements. Messrs. Presbrey, Cleveland, et al., are to be congratulated upon the attention to detail which resulted in the display of so much pep and "punch." Theirs was a task far from easy; even the securing of sufficient chairs to accommodate the big attendance was something in the nature of an undertaking; and the fact that the dinner was perfect in every particular is here recorded as a more or less permanent appreciation of their successful labors.

The business meeting which followed the feast was remarkable for two things, modesty and enthusiasm. Modesty upon the part of those who were called upon for reports—and such brief and succinct reports they were!—of the Guild's progress during its "baby" year. And enthusiasm, genuine and unrestrained, on the part of the members in appreciating the tremendous labors which the reports so modestly summarised. The election of twelve new members of the council, the adoption of the new constitution and by-laws by unanimous vote, and an unreserved endorsement of the Guild's activities in the past year, were high-lights in the evening's program.

All Hail! The Writers

It is easy to fall into the over-use of adjectives in referring to the Guild's attainment in its first year, but when one comes to its paramount achievement, the launching of its unique club, to be known as The Writers, it is difficult to avoid superlatives.

From the birth of the Guild idea, little more than a year ago, to the present possession of the magnificent clubhouse at Las Palmas and Sunset Boulevard, is a journey that might justifiably have taken years to complete. Only a few months ago the vision of the Guild installed in a home of its own, conducting a club that would rival the Lambs or Players, dissolved into the rather drab scene of a general meeting, held in the foreign territory of the Woman's Club to the dithyrambic accompaniment of a winter wind-storm.

It was then that a few brave souls offered to lead the way to the promised land, and called for volunteers to follow. Metaphorically speaking, this pioneer caravan painted "Clubhouse—or Bust!" on its wagon, and rattled away into the unknown amid the prayers and misgivings of less hopeful members. More than one who wished them luck anticipated an early return with "Bust, by God" chalked over the original motto!

But, as ever in such romances, pluck and perseverance did the impossible, and *today* the clubhouse is an accomplished fact. More than that, workmen are already remodeling the beautiful building; a contract has been let for six thousand dollars' worth of fine furniture, and by the time you read this paragraph the metamorphosis of the building will be well under way. The "job" is going to be a good one, bank on that. A special committee, conferring with the indefatigable Gene Presbrey, is bossing the work. *It's some* committee, too. The

chairman is Rob Wagner (did you know that he took *first prize* for portraiture at the Panama-Pacific Exposition?), member of the Council and the Executive Committee. Assisting him is Penrhyn Stanlaws, world-famous artist (and destined to be a world-famed director, too, if we have the right "dope"), also a member of the Guild, and Cedric Gibbons, Goldwyn technical director, who needs no introduction. With these experts contributing their services gratis you can rest assured that the clubhouse of The Writers will be a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

The formal opening, when members will get their first closeup of the clubhouse in its new costume and makeup, will be announced later. It will undoubtedly be late in August or early in September.

Club Plans

It is the aim of the officers to make the clubhouse an institution that will cater to practically every social and professional need of the members. Generally speaking, the "atmosphere" will be that of The Lambs, or Players, but, of course, The Writers will have its own distinctive personality. The club will also be the Western headquarters of The Authors' League. (We refuse to write the full monniker; looks too formal.) The job of laying down rules and regulations governing the conduct of the club, and also the admission of associate members from the allied arts, Army and Navy, etc., and so forth, has been handed over to a special committee headed by Thompson Buchanan and made up of four other live wires, A. S. LeVino, Marion Fairfax, Jeanie MacPherson and Eugene Presbrey. This committee will submit its suggestions to the clubhouse committee, a standing committee which under the guidance of the Council and the Executive Committee, will have entire charge of club affairs for the year.

This general clubhouse committee will have from fifteen to twenty members, with Thompson Buchanan as chairman. Several sub-committees will divide the details of running the club, among them: House committee, Mr. LeVino, chairman; Entertainment, Miss Fairfax, chairman; Membership, Miss MacPherson, chairman; Finance, Elmer Harris, chairman.

After the clubhouse is formally opened there will be regular monthly meetings of the whole Guild, at each of which an entertainment will be provided. In order to insure variety in these frolics the entertainment committee has decided to exploit the talents of all members, and every month a new special committee will be appointed to arrange for the next monthly "doings," the chairman of this committee being held responsible for the program.

In addition to the monthly entertainments a number of social affairs, to which the public will be invited, are now being planned by Miss Fairfax's committee. The first of these, which will also be the first big social event of the coming season in Los Angeles, is a costume ball at the Ambassador, to be given in September or early in October. The promised attendance of stars of the social world, the stage, screen, literary and artistic professions, and fifty-seven assorted kinds of celebrities is assurance that the ball will be a brilliant success. Those attending will be expected to appear in costumes representing their favorite characters in literature.

Rumor hath it that Thompson Buchanan will be seen as "Gasoline Gus," that Rupert Hughes will disguise himself as Balzac, and that Frank E. Woods will gratefully obliterate his identity under the mask of Lady Godiva. But these, alas, are only rumors!

Sir Gilbert Parker's Gift

The thanks of the Guild are due to Sir Gilbert Parker for his generous donation of seventy-five dollars, the proceeds of an article written by the veteran novelist himself in behalf of the writing profession for which he received unsolicited and unexpected payment. The executive committee has decided to use this welcome gift as a nucleus for the clubhouse library. It is intended to make this library a real asset to the members and a committee, headed by Mr. LeVino, is already at work upon this project. Several members have already donated books and others have promised.

Ivy on Club Insured

When the Screen Writers' Guild bought their new clubhouse at Sunset boulevard and Las Palmas drive, one of the chief reasons for the choice was the beautiful growth of Japanese ivy that covered the walls and roof. But some one thought of the possibility of the destruction of the ivy by fire or other acts of fate and so alarmed the guild with this pessimistic forethought that all were for circumventing the calamity if it could be done. They found that there is no way of assuring certain protection to the ivy, so the next best thing was done—it was insured. The policy written calls for payment of $5000 if the drapery of vines comes to harm.

The *"beautiful inkwell"* of sterling silver which the executive committee presented to Thompson Buchanan, the retiring president of the Guild, was received in the manner of a true photodramatist for, without wasting words Mr. Buchanan put the gift into immediate action.

Dwight Cleveland has been an active worker in securing stock subscriptions from members for the new club house. He has worn out one full set of tires, been arrested for speeding twice and has talked himself into a mellow hoarseness.

Jack Cunningham, high speed continuity writer of durable qualities and sunny disposition, is now a member of the Lasky-Famous Players staff.

The legal abilities of Bert LeVino and Elmer Rice have been so widely recognized that it is rumored that one of these brilliant young men may run for the office of District Attorney in Los Angeles County at the next election.

Al. Cohn, now in New York, is expected to return to Los Angeles within a few days. Waldemar Young is also returning from the East coast to his old stamping ground in Hollywood.

The library committee is starting a campaign to stock the shelves of the new club house with a carefully chosen selection of books. Members who desire to make donations of sets or single volumes will meet with no opposition.

With the aid of the art committee, headed by Rob Wagner, Mr. Presbrey is furnishing the new club house from the ground up and when the job is done there will be no more attractively arranged club house in the United States.



Brevity

By J. R. McCarthy

No longer need the public fear
Six solid reels of "atmosphere;"
We'll soon discover how it feels
To see a feature in two reels.

The movies trail milady's dress—
From long to short, and even less;
And some poor wights would pay their quarter
More eagerly if both were shorter.



THE fallacy that intellectual misses lack beauty and charm was exploded at the recent Screen Writers' Guild dinner. Some of the mightiest intellects in Filmdom were visibly disturbed, if not dizzied, by the poetic presence of Miss Bradley King; and as for June Mathis, Jeanie MacPherson and several others—they could have hugged any eminent author or humble continuity writer present, and never have received a single reprimand.



BAYARD VEILLER has written the National Board of Censorship requesting permission to film a close-up of a temperamental young actress who insists on exposing her ears. The censors say you can't show any scene in which women expose parts of their persons which under ordinary circumstances are kept covered.



Conversations

I. On Contracts

Set down by Beverly Glenn

(With apologies to Major Owen Hatteras for borrowing his excellent idea)

Scene: Porch of the Screen Writers' Guild Clubhouse.

Time: Seven-thirty any Wednesday evening.

Persons: Albert Shelby Le Vino and Elmer Rice, of the Guilds' legal committee.

Le Vino

My objection is that you know nothing of the principals of law, yet you insist upon arguing with me. We should save a lot of time if you would rely on my judgment.

Rice

I don't agree with you.

Le Vino

You never do. That is your weakness. You would avoid a great deal of embarrassment if you would realize that I am seldom wrong. Here is this matter of an equitable contract for screen writers. The document that you have drawn up offers about as much protection as a Mother Goose jingle. No one with mentality above the average of a second-class moron would think of signing such a paper. For the love of Mike, don't let anyone else see it. As a friend I'll keep your secret.

Rice

You don't need to. I am going to read it at the meeting tonight and it will be accepted without any question.

Le Vino

For heaven's sake, don't! If Elmer Harris ever sees this thing that you call a contract you will lose your job at Realart. Up to now you seem to have deluded him into thinking that you are a reasonable, bright young man. Why let the truth be known, when you are getting along so nicely?

Rice

I swear, I don't know why I take so much abuse from you. If your legal knowledge is so vast, why aren't you practicing law instead of slaving at scenario writing?

Le Vino

Merely because a good scenario writer makes more money than a good lawyer. I am a practical man and I have the future to think of.

Rice

And the past to forget, if possible. What is your particular objection to this contract? I had an attorney read it, and he agreed that it is equitable, binding and legally sound in every way.

Le Vino

He was merely trying to spare your feelings. I should hesitate to base anything more important than a luncheon engagement on such a popgun document. If I were not aware of your temperate habits I should be inclined to suspect that you had visited a liquor-legger's lair immediately before setting this whim-wham upon paper. Please tell me you are joking about seriously bringing this frippery to the attention of the Guild on a hot night, and perhaps I may continue to like you.

Rice

Sometimes I am overwhelmed by a great wave of sympathy for you. You are as appropriate and useful on a legal committee as a frog in a glass of milk. So far as you are concerned, Blackstone is a mineral. You couldn't distinguish a court-house from a moving-van. I defy you to tell me, offhand, the difference between a tort and a tortilla. It is a hundred to one shot that you define a garnishment as a spray of parsley on the edge of a platter of cold meat. Tell me quickly, what is an execution by attorney?

Le Vino

We have been friends for a long time, but I really believe that if I were armed at this moment I should demonstrate.

Rice

Let's go in. I hear Frank Woods calling the meeting to order.

Le Vino

All right. But if you persist in reading that funny contract let me go in by another door. I don't want anyone to think that I have had any hand in your fiddlededee document. I've never been accused even of temporary insanity, and I prefer to keep my reputation clean.

* * *

(Twenty minutes later.)

Frank Woods, President of the Guild

Any report from the legal committee?

Le Vino

Elmer Rice has prepared a contract that is better than anything I have ever read. As much as I hate to say it, it is just about perfect.

Frank Woods

All right, let's hear it.

Rice

(Reads the contract.)

Le Vino

I move that the contract be adopted as read.

Dwight Cleveland

I second the motion.

(The motion is carried unanimously. Thompson Buchanan borrows a cigarette from Elmer Harris. June Mathis' mother calls for her and June departs.)

Le Vino

Elmer, tell us the truth; who wrote that contract for you?

Frank Woods

Mr. Le Vino, you are out of order.

Rice

Sure, he has been for years.

(The meeting proceeds.)



A British Jolt

The influence of the Kinematograph upon National Life is the title of an article in *The Nineteenth Century and After* for April, by Arthur Weigall, an Englishman, who says: "The great majority of photoplays are produced at a single center, and represent the point of a view of a single community. The numberless multitudes of the kinema, therefore, come under one predominating influence . . . ." Weigall proceeds in a startlingly humorless, ponderous manner to admit that the British are singularly honest, notoriously kind-hearted, supremely fair, and notably free from heroics, etc., etc. In one place he writes: "The photoplays which are being presented to British audiences are, for the most part, written and produced in Western America by a small group of persons . . . ." In a most orthodox strain Weigall accuses the American made movies of inculcating the idea of winning by trickery the various battles of life; of arousing sympathy for lawbreakers by exposing the cruelty of the third degree and other weapons of the law; by regarding business integrity as a rare phenomenon; by praising honesty instead of accepting it as a matter of course, etc., etc.

Weigall advocates the encouragement of British made films, as a bulwark against the American films' insidious upsetting of rules of conduct and influence upon the standards governing national life. There is much else in Weigall's article that is at least well worth reading; there is some sound, constructive reasoning, some insularity of thought, some ignorance of conditions, and much national presumption.



IF YOU have some pet scheme for "saving" the world—some special religious or political system—make your propaganda incidental to your drama, or your story won't intrigue the salvation-proof editor.

Emotional Strategy

By Rupert Hughes

THE motion picture is so new that it has practically no dead authors, therefore no great authors for critics of a certain ancient sort to use as clubs to bash living authors with.

Motion pictures are so new and the forms and methods still so elastic and experimental that the unfortunate critics have nothing to call classics and to use as stumbling blocks for exploring feet.

Therefore the high-minded critics call all motion pictures bad and all forms and methods trashy and puerile. By staying away from the pictures and passing the theaters where they are shown with averted eyes of maidenly horror, these critics satisfy themselves of their superiority and do the film no more harm than King Canute did to the sea when he told it just how far it could go.

We are still in the pioneer stage of the photo-play. Mistakes are many and it is not easy to find all the best passes across the mountains and the great salt lakes. But the pioneers are afterward looked back upon as giants and the critics who sneered at the blundersome Columbuses and Cabots and Raleighs are now chiefly remembered because their only contribution to progress was that of the gadfly and the cockroach.

The earliest film successes, like the earliest epic poems and historical dramas, were filled with spectacular incident, elaborate trappings, battles, animals, gods and desperate adventure.

All the arts have always had and will always have, as they always should have, an interest in huge canvases, great sculptural groups, cathedrals and palaces, symphonies, grand operas, costume novels, pageants and other forms of grandeur.

So there will always be a place for moving pictures of vast mechanical or spectacular nature. And the generalship required in such works often reveals a wonderful intellectual and emotional strategy.



RUPERT HUGHES
Eminent author, writing "originals" for Goldwyn

But even in the biggest spectacles the moments of greatest appeal have usually been casual bits of graphic human veracity, a touch of character, or of sympathy, or of vivid reality.

It was in noting how these little moments caught the heart of the audience away from the riotous mobs and the tumbling automobiles that I came to believe in human nature as the true and unfailing source of strength in the motion picture, as in every other art.

Fancy, mystery, majesty, artifice, sensationalism—all of these are feeble compared with the presentation of life and truth to life. Whether in comedy or tragedy, farce, or domestic drama, the infallibly effective thing is the appeal to reality.

Many motion picture authors forget this incessantly and turn out as a result pictures whose falsehood, inconsistency and artificiality wreck all their skill. But this is also true of every other form of art.

The censors would seem to pretend that there was never any wickedness in the world until pictures began to move. And the critics would have us believe that faulty construction, insincerity, illiteracy, Philistinism and sensationalism were never heard of in books, plays or art galleries.

The camera will always make mistakes and be guilty of sins of taste or of judgment. But this is true also of the brush, the chisel, the pen and the typewriter.

The author who loves to disclose humanity to humanity will find in the camera a marvelous instrument of expression.

He ought to learn screen technique just as he learns grammar and spelling or the mixture of colors or counterpoint or the mechanics of architecture, so that he may express his own ideas in his own way. Once he has acquired a little proficiency in the language he will find that his greatest success will come from his sincerity.

There is still some conservative hostility among the earlier scenario writers toward too much sincerity, but the conservatives exist in every art.

As Dumas needed only "three boards and a passion" to make a play, so for a photoplay one needs only a camera and a passion. The spectacular element is unnecessary. The clash of character is more thrilling than the clash of armies; suspense of realistic situation than the most complex devices of coincidence or melodramatic villainy; soul-wrecks are more exciting than shipwrecks and the race of ambitions than of chariots.

The mystery story, the detective and criminal plot are welcome, as they should be. The man who is too intellectual to like them is too intellectual to live. Pessimism and cynical gloom are no more welcome here than in the other arts, but high tragedy has full scope.

Simple homely pathos or humor, graceful romance and poetic fervor, human beings undergoing human experiences with human emotions—these make an appeal that is as tremendous as it is artistic.

The sooner this is realized the less time and money and toil will be wasted on trying to dazzle the eye with gaudy carnival while leaving the heart hungry and the reason offended.

The reform most needed in the moving pictures is the awakening of scenario departments to the vital importance of motive. Too many of the old school men think the why of a character's action does not matter so long as his action is picturesque. This is no longer true. The audience will ask why if the scenario editor doesn't.

The cinema has graduated from the nursery and the fairy story period to the dignity of a grown-up art.



Wherein We Meet Again

By G. Harrison Wiley

Life. For evermore are we
Puppets, in the great fantasy.
And ye, who find your own
Or others' part
Not to your fancy,
Abide, cease to vainly pray
For soon the master,
This scene striking,
Casts you but again.
The curtain rises
Then, upon another play.



IF LIFE were filled with naught but happiness, it would be pretty hard on us photodramatists. Where would the drama come in? No conflict, no villains—gosh, what a monotonous world! Pollyanna evidently didn't stop to realize, when she said that "everything turned out happily in the end" that every end was also a beginning — just as in motion picture serials.

Towards the Original

By Edwin Schallert

ANYONE who has watched the growth of the photoplay during the past six or seven years knows that this has been a period of tremendous influences. The art of the picture has been shaping itself according to the laws drawn from the other arts. It has been wedded with varying success to drama and literature, and even music and poetry. A strange progeny has at times been the result, but the eventual outcome of the alliances and mesalliances will undoubtedly be for the good.

It all began when the pictures went to the theater for their inspiration and their talent. The boundaries of photography were restricted to the precincts of the proscenium. Stage devices were then modified to suit the needs of the newer art, stage acting pervaded the interpretative scheme, and dialogue became the essence of the subtitle to such an extent that some of the pictures were not films of action at all but of talk.

In a word, the films ran too close to the stage, and succeeded in edging away just in time to prevent a catastrophe.

Yet again is there an era of change. It spells the waning of the literary influence—a dominating one for the past several years. The undramatic narrative has had its day. It is time again for the producers to take stock of the picture art, and determine its individuality. Other influences may be gathering on the horizon for a period of momentary domination, but they too will gradually give way to the pristine strength of the new form of expression.

It is only by a retrospect and a glance at the future that we can determine where we are in the present. The past has convinced us of a great progress, the future holds the promise of a higher originality. Just as in its early life the art of music borrowed from literature and painting for its sustenance, so the films have been taking from literature and the drama necessary nutriment until they can be self-supporting. The process of digestion is much slower than that of absorption; so a period of waiting must ensue before we may determine the benefits to the system.

Just as the early art of drama and music is forgotten, so will the formative output of the pictures largely be dissipated. We know little now of Monteverde who wrote one of the first operas; we have hardly ever thought to scan the pages of Marlowe or Beaumont and Fletcher among the dramatists. Yet the former paved the way for the great virility of a Wagner; the latter for the elevated genius of a Shakespeare.

So gradually is the stem of the picture industry strengthening in order that its topmost branches may send forth the flower of artistic genius.

Today many minds are being trained daily to think in terms of pictures. The

"Skakespeare borrowed"—says Edwin Schallert, famous critic of the Los Angeles "Times," whose sound, searching critiques of music and the drama have caused artists to refer to him as the Huneker of the west. During the past two years, he has turned his thoughtful attention to the photoplay. Anyone reading this article is bound to be impressed with Mr. Schallert's calm reasoning and unbiased viewpoint. He is not a screen writer, and has no axe to grind; he writes from his reactions, as an observing critic, to the trend of the photoplay.

most advanced realize that they are but on the threshold. William De Mille told me once that he felt the great genius of pictures would never belong to this generation —that all of the present day producers were but building for the future. Only in that later day will the impulse of the creative will become apparent in its full splendor.

It is my own belief that the art will complete its cycle by returning to the wellsprings of a greater originality. The screen story of the future will not be the adaptation or transcription.

Plots must have sources, to be sure. Shakespeare borrowed liberally from the writers before his time. He did not hesitate to use the models they offered to his perceptions, but he used them as would a painter. He fired his every theme with his own spontaneous reactions.

Let us examine the field of pictures and see which have been the most noteworthy films, the originals or the adaptations. Griffith's "Birth of a Nation," perhaps the most significant and epoch-making film ever screened, was an adaptation. Yes. The theme came from Thomas Dixon's book, "The Clansman." Yes, again. But how much of the picture was Dixon and how much was Griffith? I do not think the ratio would exceed one to ten. The skeleton of the plot was not original, but the style, the thought, the atmosphere, the characters, were all developed and expanded under the skilled hand of a master cinema producer, who knew exactly the scope of his art medium, and who translated with exactness his conception of the theme into pictorial drama, without any reference whatever to the literary product from which it came.

Much the same was his handling of the story of "Broken Blossoms," one of his most recent pictures. The original Thomas Burke story had little beside a suggestion of sordid tragedy. The Griffith genius idealized its thought and its drama, and then adroitly changed them into magic of light and shadow. The Burke story itself became little more than a vague background for a heart-appealing drama.

In "Dream Street," Griffith's most recent release, he does not credit Burke with anything except the characters. The story was undoubtedly built within the studio, just as the picture was produced within the studio, and all so that it might the better fit the screen.

Now, if the foremost director sees fit so far to change adaptations that they become almost like originals, how much more reason for the young photodramatist to seek to express himself without reference to the other art mediums. All that is really necessary is the idea; the form will shape itself to him who studies the screen and seeks to visualize every thought, just as the writer seeks to put everything into the form of words.

All great scenarios must necessarily be original, even if they are adaptations. I do not know a single important exception to this rule, unless it be the scenario of William De Mille's "What Every Woman Knows." Mr. De Mille himself explained to me that he could not do otherwise than follow the original of Barrie faithfully, because everything in Barrie comes to the surface and is already fully expressed. I know that Mr. De Mille made no other claim regarding this picture than that he had photographed the play.

Different indeed was the method of Cecil De Mille in the instance of "The Admirable Crichton." It conveyed little of the Barrie original, yet as a story it was capital. Mr. De Mille wanted to approach the public in this country on a common meeting ground, and for that reason saw fit to sacrifice the general tone of the stage play. Here again we have originality in dealing with a borrowed theme. How much less criticism would Mr. De Mille have incurred, however, if he had made no attempt to utilize the Barrie play, but had instead employed an original story along similar lines?

Maurice Tourneur, Marshall Neilan, Allan Dwan and others of like ability have ever shown the success of originality in dealing with a theme. They have adapted some of their scenarios from literature and the drama, but their finest achievements have reflected a complete perception of what it means to think in terms of pictures. None of these men, perhaps, but would advocate the cause of the original story if they were sure that they could always obtain this type! Both Mr. Neilan and Mr. Dwan, I know, have stoutly defended their belief that pictures should be pictures and not related to other forms, if this be possible.

The adapter is always between the pit and the pendulum. If he adheres too closely to the original he will lose the picture perspective; if he changes his subject too greatly he will run the risk of criticism. It

is much better for the young writer to seek his own subject and then give it the form of the picture art.

Thinking in terms of pictures represents the finest conception of that form and its attendant matter. As a critic, I find the need for visualization the most important one nowadays. Speak in photography rather than in words. Allan Dwan regards every subtitle as an apology. The more of these than can be eliminated the stronger will be the spell of the action. Griffith uses titles sparingly. Each with simplicity marks a big transition. The action goes on again quickly, unimpaired.

Charlie Chaplin never uses the word when the act can be substituted. "The Kid" contained fewer subtitles than ninety per cent of the long features. A phrase or a sentence give the necessary information.

Chaplin never borrows from literary sources. He thinks ever and always in the picture form. He needs no literary or dramatic advisers. His thought is action. He represents, I believe, the most advanced type of picture creator, because he suffers from none of the restrictions which other art forms impose.

It will pay anyone to study the Chaplin style. Watch his next comedy closely. It will be, possibly, a model for a dozen dramas. His "One A. M." was a *true picture*. So, too, was "A Dog's Tale." These move without distraction to the eye by the most direct route to a definite destination.

Of course, it may seem out of order to select a comedian as an inspiration for photodramatic writing, but the general form of the light feature and the serious is the same. The comedy seems freer, because its style is generally less alloyed.

No one, I believe, can make any mistake by trying his hand at writing comedies early in his experience. The temptation to stray into bypaths away from *pictures* is minimized. You cannot put a gag on the screen unless you can see it performed. Every bit of action has to have a meaning, or else the whole thing falls flat.

The sense of plot may be developed gradually. It should follow the form of pictures. That is the fault with most plots now. They are much better told in printer's ink than they look in photography. So much waste material might be eliminated by more correct construction.

The closer the adherence to the limits of the screen, the greater the power of concentrated thought. The photodramatist has the chief struggle before him to increase this power, because his progress will demand not only the proficiency of the thinker, but will require beside the clairvoyance which enables him to see transpire whatever he puts on paper.



Visitors

By May Brown

Skipping along, carefree and singing gaily,
Comes grinning Comedy;
While, merciless and grim, behind him
Stalks gaunt Tragedy.
We welcome Comedy with open arms and
smiling face,
And shrink with fearsome eyes from
Tragedy.
But both alike come in to seek the warmth
of our hearth fire,
And both alike sit down to dine with us—
The welcome guest and the forbidden one.



IF YOU are wallowing around the beaten path, ponder romance after marriage and the wonderful heart-beats of old age.

I'm Guilty, Dr. Crafts!

By William E. Wing

Noted photodramatist and Re-construction Editor of the Educational Department of The Palmer Photoplay Corporation.

SUDDENLY discovering myself to be one of the blood-thirsty scoundrels of Filmdom, who has scored a huge success in aiding his fellow demons to fill all the penitentiaries of these United States with victims of my misdoings; but, being unaware of the fact until my attention was called to it by Dr. Crafts, a high-priced evangelist in the city of Albany, N. Y., I hereby yield to the moans of a conscience which has the kick of "white mule," and would calm my tempest-tossed soul by reparation.

Could not Dr. Crafts and his accomplices in snatching evil from a reluctant people, induce congress to pass a bill whereby we guilty wretches who write photoplays would be forced to exchange places with our victims behind the bars—those who turned criminal after seeing our stories on the screen?

For example, I now am willing to pay the awful price for writing that mother-love story. I would be willing to deliver the red-handed murderer, who was such a pure soul before seeing this picture, and turn over to him my palatial city residence, my fleet of limousines and my bills for same, while I entered the harbor of refuge behind those granite walls.

The horse thief, whose downfall must have come from viewing the scene wherein I criminally allowed baby to tip the ink into the pastor's silk hat, could have my country place, my hungry equines and my income tax statement for the ensuing year.

The infants, less than one year of age, who began hurling lighted lamps at their dear old grandmothers because of my debasing theme, with its frightful moral, regarding regeneration, would be given my model dairy, a self-milking proposition, according to the rival press.

I believe that Rex Beach, Rupert Hughes, Sir Gilbert Parker and all other writers included in the condemnation of a recent revivalist, who referred to all picture people as "lily-livered lobsters" and members of a "Godless gang;' all of these, I believe, would be eager to exchange places with Mike th' Bite, "One-round" Hogan, "Killer" Krugg, and other gunmen, crooks and dips who, naturally, owe their misfortunes and incarcerations to those perpetrating the crime of the ages.

It is only right that I should initiate this great movement for the right. Dr. Crafts, Deacon Blue and Albany, N. Y., must perceive that I too am a reformer, although, by some slip of the machinery, I am not paid for it. Perhaps there was not enough to go around.

Should this proposed measure become a law, the government should play absolutely fair, though, and not exchange for us moral convicts, the criminals who got that way before the advent of motion pictures.

That would leave quite a number of preachers and other brethren in jail, but it would serve them right.

They failed to await the psychological moment—the birth of the deadly motion picture!



OLD SUBSCRIBER: You are misinformed. Scenario editors are not chronically afflicted with spots before the eyes or bad livers. However, one of them recently went insane after reading for the nine hundred and thirty-seventh time in one week the story about the anguished heroine who had to marry the villain to save her parents from ruin.



This Side of Nirvana

By Ted LeBerthon

Vanity, O Ephemera!

One hears so much, from the lips of young screen writers, about stories being rejected by studios and agents that in truth are better than many of the stories produced and exhibited. What poppycock! It is practically impossible for any human to fairly judge any work of art he may evolve; it is far easier to see the mote in the other chap's orb than the beam in thine own lamp. If one could possibly apply the same searching, ruthless criticism to one's own photoplay creation as one does to those which flicker across silver-sheets, things would assume a truer perspective. Can you be as merciless to yourself as to the other fellow? Judging by prevalent human standards, you cannot. We are as a race still blinded by our own shadows; still fettered by the illusion of separateness, still swerved by emotion rather than by reason—and most of our emotions are stirred up by considerations affecting our personal welfare and being. The best stories are, have been, and always will be, screened—or printed for that matter. Sometimes it so happens that a writer is born out of his Time, with a sense of values not in common with his fellow beings; artistically, his work may excel—but his theme or characters be unrecognizable to the stumbling, blundering humanity of the Age. Such souls will ever elicit the true student's sympathies, for some of them at least have become sensitive to a higher or subtler beauty—while, alas, their stories are as hieroglyphics to the crowd. But these souls are seldom the fretters, are seldom the disgruntled; they are not the ones who cry out that their stories are better than someone else's. No—that prerogative is usually monopolized by mediocrity, by the vain, the self-hypnotized.

Have Patience

Mrs. Kate Corbaley, who has sold more "original" screen stories to studio editors than anyone else in the business, says that the young writer must exercise the virtue of patience. She believes that it is natural to suppose that any photoplay agent is doing his or her best to sell stories, and that the element of time precludes the possibility of making numerous reports on the progress of the story through the hands of the scenario editors. Some young screen writers have even asked for detailed weekly reports setting forth the opinions of various editors. When an agent is handling around four or five hundred stories, such a thing is impossible.

Another thing—Mrs. Corbaley believes every photodramatist should make two carbon copies of every manuscript, and should send her the original and one carbon, as in a few instances manuscripts have been lost by a scenario editor or agent.

Knowing Life

We hear so much about the good screen writers "knowing life." Just who knows life? Is it not really a question of knowing those aspects and elements of life that are most interesting to the greatest number?—that is, if popularity and monetary reward are the criteria of achievement. It seems to me that it is not the knowledge of the various underlying forces that govern human activity or the expansive knowledge of varied forms of living and being, but the exposition of phases of life which all would like to experience—phases idealized and magnified, rather than real. In fact—again within the creed of material gain—it is unwise to plumb life too deeply; strange, disturbing depths are apt to be sounded, complacency disturbed, illusions unveiled. The successful screen writer—from the commercial viewpoint—will be the one whose mental and spiritual development parallels the popular novelist's; one whose achievement will be upon the plane of the leading magazine writers and popular fictionists of the day, rather than in the realms of Flaubert, Balzac, Andreyev, Gorki, Dreiser, Conrad, Anatol France, et al. The realist of the photodrama will come upon the scene when we have evolved the Little Theatre of the Screen.

The $5000 Scenario Contest

A Story of Ability Unearthed

THE J. Parker Read, Jr., National Scenario Contest, conducted through the Newspaper Enterprise Association, has come to a happy ending, as all things pertaining to the cinema cosmos must. It is estimated that over ten thousand scenarios were submitted, and it took a trained staff of readers several months to select from this landslide an even hundred stories for ultimate consideration by the judges: Mr. Read, C. Gardner Sullivan and Miss Bradley King.

It took them one month to come to a final decision, the first prize of $2500 being awarded to Mrs. Frances White Elijah, a pretty Chicago girl in her early twenties who was spending the summer at Del Monte, a California summer resort. Her story was "The One Man Woman."

The second prize of $1500 was awared to A. Earl Kauffman of York, Pennsylvania, for his story, "The Leopard Lily." Mrs. Anna Mezquida of San Francisco won the third prize of $1000 with her screen story, "The Charm Trader."



J. PARKER READ, JR.
Represents the highest type of artistic achievement

Seven honorable mentions were made by Mr. Read, who says these other strivers for honors achieved very worth while scenarios. They are: Helene H. Wilson, Foreign Trades Building, Seattle; Ethel Crane, 227 Duperior Avenue, New Iberia, La.; Juliet G. Sager, 202 West Monroe St., Springfield, Ill.; George S. O'Neal, 4655 Cole Avenue, Dallas, Texas; S. G. Spalding, 700 Ravine Avenue, Lake Bluff, Ill.; Julienne Courpiere, 1135 Filbert St., San Francisco; and Rudolph W. Little, 148 West 42nd Place, Los Angeles.

It may not be flattering to masculine conceit, but two of the three prize winners were of the gentler sex, as well as four of the seven who received honorable mention. The prize winning stories will be used as vehicles for Louise Glaum.

The J. Parker Read, Jr., contest was the first of its scope ever attempted, and that artistic young producer-director is to be commended by all thoughtful people for this generous impetus given the creative impulse of potential American photodramatists.

It had long been Mr. Read's idea to unearth talent lying dormant among the masses; it has ever been his belief that the great American screen epic will be written by one of these "Unknowns"—whose first and only love is the photoplay.

The prizes awarded by Mr. Read far exceeded monetarily what any of the winners could have received from our front rank magazines for these same stories. The contest was conducted in a dignified manner, and the greatest care taken to accord everyone an equal chance of winning. A deadline was set for the posting of manuscripts to the Read organization, and considerable time allowed to elapse in order to preclude the possibility of any stories sent from far distant points within the alloted time being excluded.

Preliminary to Winning

By Frances White Elijah

I HAVE always made it a point in life to never feel sorry for myself no matter what happened. It seems to me it is a very grave mistake to indulge in self pity, and I am now wondering if I can conscientiously swing the pendulum to the opposite extreme and congratulate myself. I think life without thrills is really very stupid, and I am frank to admit I was not only excited but very much thrilled when I received a telegram which read something like this:

"I am glad to inform you that your story, *The One Man Woman,* has been awarded the first prize of $2500 in my scenario contest.

"J. Parker Read, Jr."

It was a fortunate thing for the peace of my neighbors that my young daughter was with me at the time, and that I am endeavoring to teach her poise and dignity; otherwise I fear I might have "reverted to type" in my excitement and given a war whoop of delight.



FRANCES WHITE ELIJAH
Winner of the First Prize of $2500

Now that the first thrill has subsided and the check is nearly spent, I think I am calm enough to accept the invitation of The Photodramatist to tell something of my efforts to learn photoplay writing.

After the war I found my own little world about as topsy turvy as the big outside world. I held a peace conference of my own, and realized I must also go through a "period of readjustment." To be worth while ourselves we must do something worth while. If we are to be mentally alert we must exercise our brains; to be happy, we must be busy; to be satisfied, we must create. Therefore, I decided on three essential things which must be the foundation of whatever I should undertake. An art which required brain exercise, something which adequately compensated materially for the effort expended, and above all, a field that had unlimited future possibilities. I think the future of the cinema art was what appealed to me most in deciding to make an effort to write for the screen. That the field is already crowded, and with some of our most eminent authors, was not in the least discouraging to me, as I am a strong believer in the old adage, "Competition is the life of trade."

Now, don't imagine that I made up my mind to become a writer, and "presto chango" I became one and won a twenty-five hundred dollar prize before breakfast. The only real credit I deserve is the fact that I had the sense and good fortune to go about it in the right way. I believe success lies within ourselves, and if we want anything badly enough we have no one to blame but ourselves if we do not get it. But that does not mean we have not got to struggle and sacrifice to gain it. If I had made up my mind to be a sculptress, I certainly would have considered it necessary to go to art school, so when I determined to be a scenario writer, I naturally enrolled in the

best school I could find which taught the art in which I was ambitious to succeed. And frankly, without Palmer training I know it would have been a long, hard road, and it's long and hard enough at best. Without learning the fundamental principles of photoplaywriting first you have about as much chance of success as you would have if you undertook to solve a problem in algebra without having studied arithmetic.

Extensive reading has been of great benefit to me in the preparation of stories. By reading good drama one subconsciously absorbs plot construction, the art of climax, character development, and other literary qualities which are needed for screen writing. Try to plan to read at least for an hour every day, and be sure it is worth while drama. In addition, read the current magazines. They will aid in suggesting ideas, new twists, and the latest trends of thought. Do not overlook the newspapers; they will keep you in a down-to-the-minute mood, which is demanded by the producers. More than one good photoplay has been built up around a small item appearing in even an obscure newspaper. Be sure to read the magazines dealing with photoplays, both those of the trade type, which are taken primarily by the exhibitors and the producers, and the so-called "fan" publications as well. The ambitious scenario writer should have the viewpoint of the exhibitor, for you must know what points make a photoplay salable to the public. Of course, we all know it is vitally important to see all of the best pictures produced and study them carefully. I think it advisable to stick to stories that can be inexpensively filmed. Don't write in any Falls of Babylon, armies led by the famous Horatios holding any well-known bridges, or any stories that call for sets that run into the tens of thousands, and crowds of extras that eat up unheard-of payrolls.

This seems to be the era of cheaper and better pictures. The day of waste has been eliminated. Write a simple story, not too many characters, have your locale accessable, and deal with a subject with which you are familiar. Write true to life; fill it with human interest.

Remember that the keynote of all good photodramas is primarily action. Your characters can best be described by the deeds you have them perform. When I say "action" do not interpret this as melodramatic action exclusively. It may be mental action, not physical action, but each step in the plot must take the audience nearer and nearer the climax.

I have learned that it is useless preparing either the descriptive or sub-titles. Every studio or producer has a staff of highly-trained sub-title writers, and a very small percentage of those you write, if any, will be used. A picture cannot be subtitled in advance; they have to be written after the film has been shot and is assembled in the projection room. Often subtitles are changed a dozen times before the producer is satisfied with the result. I have heard that exhibitors fight shy of unhappy endings because the people do not like them, therefore the producers are chary about making them, so your story is more salable if "everyone lives happy ever after." But be sure that it is not too saccharine.

It seems advisable to stick to the modern stories. Every now and then a historical or costume play scores a big success, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Most producers do not care to spend a great deal of money on research work and costumes on a picture which is at the best a gamble, and, besides, the classical works of literature and history furnish plenty of such material that is uncopyrighted and for which the producer would have to pay nothing.

You know you can beyond a doubt, if you are a genius, write an excellent photoplay and observe none of these suggestions, but I merely mention them, as they are the principles I applied in writing "The One Man Woman." When you finally feel you have written a screen story, and you know it is your best effort, don't hesitate to try and market it. The producers are crying for good stories. If you do not care to place it with an agent, mail it to a studio that is in the market for the material such as you have written. Don't think you have to carry it to the studio personally. That does not help a bit. The personality of a writer never put over a poor script with a scenario editor.

Personally, I am for Mrs. Corbaley and her methods of placing things on the market. Your chance of making a sale is far greater if your story is placed in the hands of a reliable agent who knows the market and who has entrance to the studios. I am more than enthusiastic about the thoroughness of the Palmer organization in that they not only teach you from the beginning, but when they discover you have ability, they advise and encourage you, and then, best of all, actually sell your brain child.

How It Happened

By A. Earl Kauffman

FOR 28 years, five months and 23 days I've waited for this moment! All my life I've longed to write one of those first person things in which the "I's" stand out like oil wells on a California landscape.

When Mr. Manker broke the news to me that I'd won the second prize of $1,500 in the recent J. Parker Read-Los Angeles Evening Express scenario contest and told me I might write something about the author of the runner-up script for the Photodramatist if I wanted—Wanted! A machine gun squad couldn't stop me!—I asked him, endeavoring to display an innate modesty, about how many words he could use. "Go as far as you like," said he, and reader, I'm sorry for you! You don't know what Mr. Manker's let you in for!



A. EARL KAUFFMAN
Winner of the Second Prize of $1500

Let's see, five sentences and only eight "I's." I must do better. But the shock of it all has been so great, I scarcely know where to begin. (That's a literary perversion of "unaccustomed as I am," which, I have noticed, has been used with telling effect by my predecessors in the autobiography line.)

"The beginning," suggests Mr. LeBerthon, "might be as good a place as any."

Well, then—as the head butler remarks to the second assistant waiting maid in the four-act society drama—the beginning, it seems to me, was upon a day in September, 1920, when I came upon the Palmer Plan advertisement in a magazine. No, on second thought—with apologies to Jay E. House—the beginning was a little before that.

With characteristic modesty I will pass over the cold Sunday afternoon in November, 1892, when I happened in York, Pa. (it *is* on the map if you'll look closely); touching not at all on the aversion to chicken dinners which diverted a youth designed by his parents for the ministry into the newspaper game, wherein one is fortunate to get any dinner at all; briefly referring to a briefer war experience in the United States and England resembling in many respects the last act of a Cohan musical comedy; and stopping only long enough to remark that I have been attempting to write since my high school days and expect to go on attempting until the Twentieth Amendment prohibits the printing of everything save Baer's Almanac, jokes omitted, and bars all forms of amusement except the annual Children's Day exercises. Some sentence, that!

A chance remark by my English teacher at high school unfortunately made within my hearing, implanted in my brain the firm conviction that the gods had given to the world a new O. Henry, who spelled his name with a "K." Singularly enough, the power to perceive this seemed to be denied everyone but me. Landladies twice threatened me with ejection because of rheumatism superinduced by picking up my re-

turned manuscripts from the vestibule floor. I have not seen recently the postman on whose route I resided longest but I have heard that he was retired from the service some years back because of fallen arches and I have always felt more or less guilty. If any patron of art ever comes forward with a trophy for the world's prize collection of rejection slips, boys, the crepe de chine typewriter is mine! There's no argument.

Writer's periodicals intrigued my interest with announcements that motion picture producers were buying stories like waffles. It went against the grain to send off those beautifully polished classics for sale as motion picture scenarios, but I needed a new lot of postage stamps. So, away they went, accompanied by neat notes offering the "enclosed at your usual rates." The surplus proceeds which undoubtedly would be contained in the envelopes which would be returned to me speedily I mentally invested in a couple of thousand dollars worth of hand embroidered oil stock certificates.

The "usual rates" for the purchase of the commodity which the return mail brought home used to be, and probably still is, one-fourth of a cent per pound. Then I saw the Palmer advertisement.

Now I had not been unmindful that there might be a tip or two on screen writing to be obtained before one really got a good price for one's scenarios, so after the shock of having the first batch of stories returned had subsided, I read a number of books and articles on photoplay writing. All were as lucid as Prof. Einstein's theory and as helpful as a pair of glass eyes to a blind man. Hence, when I read the Palmer ad., though not a native of the Ozark district, I looked upon its assertions with the skepticism born of newspaper experience, heightened by investigation of the books and articles purporting to disclose the "secret of writing for the movies."

The advance material the Palmer corporation sent me, embodying the "Stories of Success" pamphlet—exactly what it was called, "proof positive"—together with the written endorsement of the leading photoplay producers, decided me to give the plan a try. "But," said I, "I will enroll on the part payment plan and if the first units prove the system the fliv I know they will, I won't be much the loser." I mailed the balance of the enrollment fee the same day the units arrived. A few hours after I received the Handbook, Frederick Palmer had shown me my efforts bore as much resemblance to screen stories as does an Eminent Author Revamp to a Jeanie Macpherson photodrama. A wave of pity swept over me for the readers at the various studios who had been compelled to read the stuff I had been sending. I resolved to expatiate by crimes, if possible, by a thorough study of the Palmer Plan to extend through months before ever I would submit another scenario.

But we're "only poor weak mortals after all!" An announcement of the Read-Express-Glaum scenario contest in a copy of the Photodramatist wooed my fancy. "Back up," Satan!" said I sternly, but the little devils of temptation were insistent. It was all I could do to keep them at bay until I had thoroughly read, re-read and studied the text books. Possibly a week elapsed before the desire to enter that contest became so poignant I couldn't endure it any longer. This was in the latter part of October, and the contest, if memory serves me aright, was to close at midnight on October 31. Hasty calculation showed me I had exactly two days in which to visualize and write my story, allowing five days for the manuscript to reach its destination.

I had been turning over the climactic situation in my mind in hazy fashion for some time, but the story hadn't the least vestige of shape or proportion. Not expecting to win, but more for the exercise of putting the Palmer technique to a written test, I began on "The Leopard Lily" the following afternoon, worked on it practically continuously for 23 hours and mailed it at 3:20 a. m., barely enough time remaining for the manuscript to reach the Express office. I tried to construct a *screen* story according to the Palmer principles.

Were it not for the fact that I understand Mr. LeBerthon has planned to print a few other things in this month's issue besides this disconnected attempt at an autobiography, I'd like to tell what I really think of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, its officials, its system and its *results*. But all I could say would be an elaboration only of the eloquent story told by the result of the contest—that the Palmer Plan is 100 per cent.

And now I'll tell you a secret that maybe you've already guessed, but please don't tell Mr. Read. I didn't win the $1,500 prize. The Palmer Plan won it.

But I'm going to spend it.

Every Stroke Counts

By Anna B. Mezquida

ALTHOUGH I have been selling short stories and poems to the magazines for the last six years, each new acceptance brings the same exciting thrill as the last. And I am doubly happy at winning the thousand dollar prize in the J. Parker Read Contest, as "The Charm Trader" is my first scenario. Of course, I hope to see some of my magazine stories upon the silver sheet, and I did try my hand at turning one of these stories into a scenario, but "The Charm Trader" is my first original scenario written directly for the screen.

In this connection I wish to express my grateful appreciation of the Palmer Course in Photoplaywriting. Although I had an unique plot and dramatic situations in mind for my "Charm Trader," I am very sure I should not have known how to go about preparing an acceptable scenario without the Palmer Plan to point the way. Screen technique is so different from that of the short story that they must be learned separately.



ANNA B. MEZQUIDA
Winner of the Third Prize of $1000

It seems to me worse than foolish for any person to attempt to write for the screen without some training. I believe in talent—yes, Inspiration—yes, Love for one's work—yes! But from the bottom of my heart I believe in study and practice. Physicians train for their profession. So do lawyers, musicians, painters. Why not writers?

I had an exceedingly brief time in which to study the Palmer Course before preparing my scenario for the J. Parker Read Contest. But that little time was of inestimable help. I think I particularly valued the instruction on "Visualization." In "The Charm Trader" I tried to visualize every step—to see how it would appear upon the screen, and to leave out every word and phrase that would not "picture." I suppose that is the main point where the so-called "twin" arts of screen writing and short-story writing suddenly become strangers.

Palmer criticisms, too, are of especial value. I believe that few writers are good critics of their own work. A writer becomes so enthusiastic with his "big idea," so wrapped up with his characters, that he finds it hard to see his own faults. Or he may have worked so long over his story that he has lost perspective. But the trained critic, reading a story for the first time, can lay his finger at once upon its flaws.

I repeat: I believe in study, and I believe in hard work. Only in very rare cases does a writer win success without serving a strenuous apprenticeship. Personally, I am a very hard worker, although I have been heavily handiacpped by a long series of illnesses. I work conscientiously, seriously, with the idea of always putting my best into a story. I do not believe in sermonizing in a story, but I should like to feel that I have given my readers a little more than a moment's amusement or pleasure.

Essay Contest Winners

"Why I Am Writing Photoplays"

Miss Minnie L. Van Vleet, of Montour Falls, New York, won the first prize of $25.00 in the "Why I am Writing Photoplays" essay contest. May Carey Miller, 1012 West High Street, Lima, Ohio, won the second prize of $15.00 and H. L. Viser, 742 Christian Street, Shreveport, Louisiana, won the third prize of $10.00. These winning essays will be published in the September PHOTODRAMATIST. We were unable to read a few of the essays, which were received after this number of our magazine went to press. It seems quite significant that the first and second prize winning essays were written by women. Truly, Woman is coming into her own.

Honorable mention is given the following for their essays: Binnie Paul McEldowney, A. A. Whitefield, Hester Venable, Philip Easy, Alice B. Bardsley, Mrs. Edward M. O'Bryan, H. H. Lynch, J. R. J. Hayes, Joseph Henry King, Etta Hargrave Brown, Lila E. Mussen, W. W. Sheppard, Dolores Avery, Mrs. R. S. Jones, William C. Houston, Daniel E. Buzzard, Fred C. Myer, J. E. Burnham, Mrs. Maude E. Monahan, F. X. Schmidt, Roy K. Adams, Mrs. H. C. McCormas, Isabelle van Dusen, Elizabeth M. Thatcher, Mr. Carl E. Larson, Mary Hester McCoy, Anthony Rivas, Fred H. Pennington, Robert Russell Horner, Theodore Acland Harper, Walter E. Warren.

Want Collaborators

The following Palmer students desire to get in touch with other students in their respective communities for the purpose of collaboration or mutual study:

Akron, Ohio: B. Blair Young, 968 Bell St.
Baltimore, Md.: Adolph Robl, 1616 Bank Street.
Baltimore, Md.: W. Luther Jamison, 934 N. Gilmor St.
Birmingham, Ala.: H. R. Waite, 703 N. 19th St.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Mrs. Albert C. Conklin, care General Delivery.
Chicago, Ill.: F. W. Ickes, 1221 E. 65th St.
Cleveland, Ohio: Emil J. Mauek, 3468 West Forty-ninth St.
Cumberland, Md.: I. E. Detick, 214 Oak St.
Detroit, Mich.: Harold R. Knapp, 539 Melbourne Ave.
Duluth, Minn.: Jack Jones, Jr., Hermantown Road.
East Palestine, Ohio: S. Mack Williams, Box 323.
Elgin, Ill.: Elmer E. Schenet, 466 E. Chicago St.
Franklin, La.: David W. Alpha, Box 129.
Greymouth, New Zealand: Maud McIntosh, Preston, Road.
Hiawasse, Ga.: Walter E. Warren, Box 76.
Humboldt, Neb.: Mrs. Leola Schuler.
Jersey City, N. J.: Estelle Max, 290 Jackson Ave.
Kansas City, Kans.: Harry E. Farrer, 711 Virginia Ave.
Little Falls, N. Y.: Mrs. Mary E. Stewart Evans, 332 South Ann St.
Los Angeles, Cal.: Allyn Lorraine, 339 Citizens National Bank Bldg.
Los Angeles, Cal.: Mrs. Leo. Lehmann, 315½ Gertrude St.
Los Angeles, Cal.: F. H. G. Seidenstucker, 562-B E. 16th St.
Louisville, Ky.: Paul Bodley, 728 W. Chestnut St.
Lundale, W. Va.: Mrs. G. E. Ingersoll.
Memphis, Tenn.: Mrs. Fannie M. Hosking, c/o M. E. Carter, Linden Station.
Missoula, Mont.: Leo Bernard Mayotte, Shapard Hotel.
Montreal, Quebec, Canada: Bruce Wilkin, 2621 Hutchinson St.
New Brighton, Staten Isl. N. Y.: Carl L. Grupen, 17 St. Marks Place.
New York City: Elsie T. Scherer, 881 Fox St., Bronx.
New York City: Pasquale J. Vitacco, c/o Y.M.C.A., 222 Bowery.
New York, N. Y.: David W. Alpha, 512 West 140th St.
New York, N. Y.: Charles G. Scholtz, 2471 Davidson Ave.
New York, N. Y.: D. W. Alpha, 522 West 140th St.
Omaha, Neb.: Frank E. Parkins, 6309 Binney St.
Parkersburg, Pa.: Oric C. Peters, 328 First St.
Philadelphia, Pa.: Herschel C. Pette, 2203 N. Phillip St.
Philadelphia, Pa.: Miss Marie Ward, 1822 Berks St.
Pittsburgh, Pa.: Louis B. Markell, 558 Allison Ave.
Cebu, Cebu, P. I.: Mr. Francisco Yap, P. O. B. 247.
Porterville, Pa.: Norman G. Wimer, R. F. D. No. 3.
Passaic, N J.: Mary M. Yokank, 43 Dayton Ave.
Ranger, Tex.: J. A. Cowart, Box 1281.
San Francisco, Cal.: M. S. Yerkovich, 67 Fourth St.
Shipman, Ill.: Mrs. Mary Graham Andrews.
Springfield, Mo.: Lillian Martin, 1014 N. Boulevard.
St. Louis, Mo.: Clarence F. Striegel, 6179 Westminster Place.
Syracuse, N. Y.: John R. Roock, 106 Hier Ave.
Washington, D. C.: Mrs. Rose B. Rehlander, 1405 Rhode Island Ave.
Youngstown, Ohio: James S. Queer, 25 Breaden St.
Toronto, Canada: Daniel Taft, 330 Brock Ave.
Toledo, Ohio: Geo. R. Scott, 2036 Ashland Ave.

Gossip Street

From Hollywood Boulevard to Times Square

Tales Titles Tell!

Many an innocent news item is misconstrued these days by the advocates of movie censorship, according to Tod Browning, who says the minds of the Puritans are so warped that newspaper announcements of current photoplay attractions sound like this: "One Week of Life with Pauline Frederick"; "Are All Men Alike with May Allison"; "Why Trust Your Husband with Eileen Percy"; "Dangerous Business with Constance Talmadge"; "Scratch My Back with a Special Cast"; "Behind the Door with Hobart Bosworth."

Mr. Browning didn't touch upon the half of it, my dears; when the soul starved ascetics read about "Midsummer Madness with Lois Wilson"; "Is Life Worth Living with Eugene O'Brien"; "The Great Moment with Gloria Swanson," and last, but—horrors—surely not least, "The Affairs of Anatol with Gloria Swanson, Wanda Hawley, Bebe Daniels, Agnes Ayres," and so on ad lib—then will these preachers of frigid instincts hie themselves to monasteries, lest these terrible photoplays carry the life force dangerously near the all too human borderlands of their erstwhile chaste souls.

Collaborating

J. Leo Meehan and Henry McCarty are collaborating in a series of eight original five-reel photoplays for Lester Cuneo, for the Doubleday Production Company. The pictures are to be distributed by Irving Lesser.

Jeanie MacPherson's New One

Quite an aura of mystery surrounds the nature of the original story just finished by Jeanie MacPherson, which Cecil B. DeMille will commence production upon about August 15th.

Peachie

George Marion, Jr., wrote the original story, "Peachie," now being produced by Katherine MacDonald.

Three Originals Purchased

Elias Schwartz, president of the Sun Film Corporation, has completed plans for the filming of thirty two-reel and six five-reel Western photoplays. Space has been secured at the Brunton Studio. Three original screen stories by George de Viteri and Marguerite Hedges have already been purchased.

Sig Schlager a Magnate

Sig Schlager has completed arrangements for the distribution of three series of productions. John H. Blackwood, erstwhile Thomas H. Ince scenario chief, and Louis Stevens are in charge of the scenario department. The first production will feature Beatrice Burnham in an original photoplay by Noble Johnson, for which L. V. Jefferson wrote the continuity.

A. R. W.

Rumor is rioting in the Marshall Neilan company. The office boy is authority for the statement that every morning Lucita Squier, scenario writer, receives a letter with the same masculine handwriting and on the same stationery. Lucita is inscrutable, sphinx-like, however.

Praise Smallwood

Many well known screen authors have congratulated Ray C. Smallwood upon his stand that the writer should share in the profits of the picture from his pen. He has been deluged with letters and telegrams at his offices at 150 W. 34th St., New York City.

Smallwood declares that, in addition to a cash advance, he will give the author of a story chosen by him a certain percentage in the receipts of the picture.

More Bouquets

William E. Wing has come in for considerable congratulation upon his most startling and unusual screen story, "The Home Trail," which Pathe has provided as a starring vehicle for Tom Santschi.

Busy Bebe

Bebe Daniels has just completed "The Speed Girl," the mirthful original screen story by Elmer Harris. Her next will be "Spring Fever," an original scenario by Katherine Pinkerton and Grace Drew Brown.

Ditto May

May McAvoy has just started work on "The Happy Ending," an original screen story by Hector Turnbull.

Smollen Signs

Bradley J. Smollen has joined the Vitagraph scenario staff; he was formerly Vitagraph publicity director.

Sada Cowan Wise

Sada Cowan, who revealed the mental and emotional attributes of a Mrs. Solomon in those splendid "originals" for Clara Kimball Young, "Hush" and "Charge It," has just completed the writing of another original screen story for Miss Young, "What No Man Knows." The title of Miss Cowan's effort is rather sweeping, and it is a question as to whether Miss Cowan or any other demoiselle knows what no man knows. If she does, and tells it, and it's something we men really should have known and have always wanted to know, Miss Cowan will win not only the respect and admiration, but the box-office support of every normal male of our acquaintance.

Shame on You, Marie!

Now along comes Marie Prevost with the statement that she will be starred in a story called "The Girl Who Knew All About Men." We had always suspected that Marie was somewhat sophisticated, but had never expected to hear of her qualifying for so all-embracing a role. When one recalls how ravishingly beautiful Miss Prevost was in those dear little flimsy Sennett bathing suits—postage stamp models—one realizes that we all knew almost all about her—but, alas, in an infinite universe there are infinite possibilities.

She Has It

Wanda Hawley has begun work on her next Realart Production, "The Love Charm," an original screen story by Harvey O'Higgins.

Europe Lures

Ouide Bergere, eminent photodramatist, has rented her home at Great Neck, Long Island, preparatory to sailing for Europe.

Ex-Prexy a Screen Writer

In the New York Times for June 12th is the following item: "The first college President to resign his position in order to write for the screen is James A. B. Scherer, according to a bulletin from the Paramount office. He has written 'Tall Timbers' for Wallace Reid. He was President of the California Institute of Technology."

Mr. Scherer has since left the Lasky organization, and it is believed will write as a free lance. He was a Palmer student for some time prior to his Lasky association.

Stays With Goldwyn

Clayton Hamilton has renewed his contract with the Goldwyn Pictures Corporation, and will continue for at least another year to participate in the editorial judgments of that organization. Mr. Hamilton occupies the chair of Professor of Dramatic Literature at Columbia University, but has been on a leave of absence during his year's association with Goldwyn. The leave has been extended so that the noted critic can continue his editorial work in the movie field for another 365 days.

Selznick Buys

Myron Selznick announces the purchase of two new screen plays to be soon put into production. One is an original script by Leonard Praskins and Theodore B. Masters, entitled "Borrowed Wings." The other is Dorothy Donnell Calhoun's story called "The Thing He Loves."

Flapper Chairs

Why are directors' chairs called "flapper chairs," because the flappers sit in them? "Not at all," says Waldo Twitchell, wit of the Reginald Barker company, "it's because they have low backs, straight legs and scant upholstering."

Great Story

Thomas H. Ince declares "Lucky Damage" (working title), by Marc Edward Jones, to be one of the finest stories he has ever filmed. Production has been started with a splendid cast including Florence Vidor, Milton Sills, Charles Clary, Frank Campeau and Joseph Singleton. It is the story of a man who, shortly after escaping from prison, is terribly disfigured in an accident, beyond all hope of recognition. Later, through plastic surgery, he is given an entirely new face—a face entirely devoid of any criminal or unwholesome expression. Then begins the real drama, with the great problem: can his soul also be regenerated? Some story, eh?

Re-issued

The Selznick Corporation has prepared for re-release the Constance Talmadge picture, "Up the Road with Sallie," originally filmed from a scenario by Julia Crawford Ivers.

Additions

Gregory LaCava has been added to the Hamilton-White Comedy scenario staff; he was formerly with the International News

Service. Joe Mitchell has just been placed in charge of the Buster Keaton scenario department. Jack Cunningham will write originals and continuities for Lasky's, transferring his affections from Robertson-Cole. Edith Kennedy, for four years a writer of originals and continuities for Famous Players-Lasky, has joined Metro, where she will write for Viola Dana.

New Scenario Home

A new and commodious building is being erected at Universal City to house the scenario department. Here will be light and airy offices for Lucien Hubbard, scenario editor; his assistant, C. F. Bender, and for the entire staff of writers. There will also be a number of quiet rooms for the story readers, and it is possible that the research library in charge of Leroy Armstrong may be moved to the new building.

Student Becomes Editor

George Wallace Sayre, a Palmer student, has just accepted the position of head of the scenario staff of the recently organized West Range Pictures Corporation. It is understood that Mr. Sayre's contract calls for a salary of $10,000 for the first year. Not bad for a young man in his early twenties.

Addresses Directors

Finis Fox, formerly of the State Legislature in Oklahoma, later general manager of a manufacturing selling company, and in the last four years a prominent photodramatist, having twelve original stories to his credit, recently addressed the Assistant Directors' Association on the absolute necessity of every assistant director studying his script continuity with a view to reducing unnecessary footage.

Two Minutes To Go

Charles Ray has just finished "Two Minutes To Go," which he directed himself from the scenario by Richard Andre. This is Ray's ninth First National production.

Not the Same

Alice Duer Miller, who recently wrote that splendid original screen story, "The Man with Two Mothers," for Tom Moore, is not the Alice D. G. Miller whose prolific typewriter recently produced "The Fourteenth Lover," soon to be filmed by Metro with Viola Dana in the stellar role. It is said that Uncle Sam constantly gets their mail all mixed up.

Wedded

Naomi Childers is now the wife of Luther Reed, photodramatist par excellence.

An Original Original

That's what Olga Printzlau is said to be writing for William de Mille—a story with a theme absolutely new in screen fiction.

Writer a Newly-Wed

Edith Kennedy, writer of original stories and continuities, has joined Metro's West Coast story producing department. Incidentally, Miss Kennedy—Mrs. Albert D. Jewett in private life—has become a member of the company's growing colony of newlyweds, of which Virginia Valli, Bert Lytell's leading lady, probably is the best known. Miss Kennedy has just returned from a three-month honeymoon that included a two thousand mile auto tour of the South and West. Jewett, a musician and composer, has returned to New York.

Korean Trip for Sada Cowan

Sada Cowan, author of all of Clara Kimball Young's recent starring vehicles and co-author of Cecil de Mille's latest pictures, "Fool's Paradise," is shortly leaving for an extended trip to the Orient. Miss Cowan plans to stay many months in Korea. She will be accompanied by her mother, Mrs. Reba Cowan.

Gladys a Guttersnipe

Gladys Walton's next is "The Guttersnipe," an original story by Percival Wilder. Wallace Clifton wrote the continuity.

Evidence

Lucien Hubbard, scenario editor at Universal City, coaxed a wheezing old car, which he hoped to trade in on a new boat, up Cahuenga Pass. One of Captain Dave Adams' speed cops overhauled him without effort. "You're arested for speeding," he said.

"How fast was I going?" asked Hubbard.

"Forty miles an hour,' was the answer.

"Will you write me a testimonial to that effect?" asked Hubbard. Later in the day he traded in the old car, using the tag as evidence that it would snort up the hill at forty.

Increase in Staff

Lucient Hubbard, scenario editor at Universal City, has added three widely-known scenario writers to his staff. J. Grubb Alexander, lately of Robertson-Cole; Edward T. Lowe, Jr., formerly of Metro, and Rita Kissin, traveler, educator and script writer, will now contribute to the success of Universal pictures. Miss Dwinella Benthol, formerly dramatic critic of the Baltimore American, has been added to the script reading staff.

Don't Neglect Your Theme

By Adolph Bennauer

Editor's Note: This is the sort of article that makes us better photodramatists. Bennauer goes to the core of things.

PERHAPS we wonder why the Theme-built story sometimes falls flat, proves lacking in sustained and dramatic conflict. The trouble is, in this case, that the author had no real Theme to begin with. What had been mistaken for Theme was merely subject matter. Subject matter is a dead commodity and possesses no inherent conflict; hence it can give us no conflict in our finished story. "Life in the Underworld," "A Love Behind a Throne" and "Dangerous Enterprise," while they may be entertaining enough to write about, are far from being Themes,—that is, in the sense in which that term is used in the photoplay.

The Theme of the photoplay is nothing more or less than a philosophy of Life. It is generally some fact, gleaned from personal observation and experience, which may be stated as a theorem and is open for argument, thus: "Honesty is the best policy," "Judge not, lest ye be judged," "The way of the transgressor is hard," etc. A Theme is the very essence of conflict, being literally the plot of our story boiled down into the fewest number of words. It always contains two distinct and opposing elements. One of these is the Motive, the other the Obstacle. The Motive moves the mind of the Principal Character, the Obstacle hinders the course of that motion. The story concerns itself with the eventual triumph of the one over the other. Thus it will be seen that there is present, also, the element of recoil. The test of a Theme, then, is that it must reflect some observation of Life, must contain a Motive and an Obstacle in well-defined contrast and must permit of being stated as a theorem which is open for argument.

All Themes are divided into two classes, vital and superficial. The superficial Theme concerns itself with *external* manifestation only. Examples are the stories where social ambition, political conflict or even war is the dominant appeal. The stories founded upon such a Theme may be huge and spectacular to the extent of "Intolerance" or "The Birth of a Nation," yet, unless they contain something of more intimate and poignant value than their scenes, the Theme cannot be said to be a vital one. The vital or "big" Theme, which constitutes the real literature of the screen, concerns itself primarily with *internal* manifestation. Its chief function is to change the heart of the Principal Character, make him look upon God and his fellow man with a clearer, better understanding. Unless it does this, it has failed entirely. All big Themes demonstrate in one form or another the triumph of right thinking over wrong. In a story dealing with such a Theme the Principal Character generally starts out with some warped or distorted view of Life, is made aware of the falseness of it and is redeemed in the end. The story is merely a sort of purifying process which cleanses his soul.

Recently a picture appeared which, as an example of romance and adventure, was entertainment raised to the nth power. Its Theme was, possibly, "Wherever there is oppression of the poor, one shall arise to champion them." It cannot be called a "big" story, however, for the Theme, though big in itself, was not used in a big way. It was merely the *raison d'etre* of the action. The oppressor was the Governor of a state and the champion an unknown bandit. The Governor was only a minor character and a very unlikable one, at that, and no change took place in his heart when Justice, personified by the Hero bandit, finally triumphed. The story might have been made a big one by having the Governor the Principal Character and the unknown bandit his son. The sacrifice of the latter's life in the cause of humanity might then have changed the hardened heart of the Governor and influenced him to deal more humanely with his people. This, of course, would have made an entirely different story, but it illustrates what we mean when we speak of "change."

Photoplays in Review

By the Staff

The Great Moment

One of the really great photoplays of the year is "The Great Moment," written directly for the screen by Elinor Glyn. The great moment itself, in which the girl's lover saves her life, after she has been bitten in the arm by a rattlesnake, by biting out the flesh and sucking the blood, is one of the most astounding situations in the annals of screen drama; treated crudely or grossly, this situation might have appeared revolting—but the unquestionably noble character of the young mining engineer, and his ever chivalrous attitude towards the girl, strikes a transcendent note that softens the physical action. The little shack in the heart of the desert near a remote mining camp, to which the young engineer next carries his sweetheart, has an air of terrible loneliness that is strangely, profoundly moving; here, in order to further counteract the poisonous snake-bite, he plies the girl with whiskey until she is intoxicated. Then follows their discovery by her conventional English father with his false, coarse deductions, and his demand that the young lovers be immediately married!

This is a model photoplay for the photodramatist; not only has Mrs. Glyn created some of the most astounding and daring situations and crises, but she has humanized these moments, has stamped them with the markings of sincerity. Her characters are drawn with an all-too-humanness that is a relief from the impossible altruistic heroes and heroines of the chronic uplifters. The plot is suspenseful to the very last. The conflicting values of widely differing ethical codes, the inherent poetic passion of the girl, the story's flaming nuances, the underlying emotional tug of the man for the woman and the woman for the man—supplying the theme of love insistent, undaunted; all these elements are fused into one of the finest romances ever filmed.

Synopsis—At a Russian orgy in St. Petersburg, Edward Pelham meets Nada, a gypsy, and makes her his wife.

The death of Nada while bringing a daughter into the world, affords Pelham relief and he pays much attention to the rearing of Nadine, his daughter.

Nadine goes to America with her father. In Nevada, Nadine meets Bayard Delaval, a mining engineer. While standing on a ridge, Bayard is about to declare his love when a rattlesnake bites her. He carries her to his secret retreat in the vicinity and to counteract the poison, plies her with liquor until she becomes intoxicated.

The two are discovered by the Pelhams, and construing the worst, the father insists upon the immediate marriage of the couple.

Hoping to win Nadine in the customary manner, Bayard agrees to a divorce. Although her pride is hurt, Nadine consents to the arrangement and their divorce follows. Bayard continues his work at the mines and Nadine goes to Washington where Hopper, a rich man, seeks to marry her.

A psychic message comes to Bayard who hurries to Washington to rescue Nadine from her proposed marriage to Hopper. He fails to meet her at a public reception and when Nadine learns that he had been there, she throws Hopper's jewels away, veils her face and hurries to Bayard's hotel.

At the hotel, Nadine flings herself into Bayard's arms. To Bayard comes a plan, and Nadine consents to go to the home of his friend and wait until he has secured a licence and a minister. Hopper overhears and bribes the taxi-cab clerk to have Nadine taken to his home instead.

Though surprised, Nadine is not afraid. Meantime, Bayard learns that Nadine has been taken to Hopper's. He hurries to Hopper's home, rescues Nadine and then both depart to become sweethearts evermore.

Without Benefit of Clergy

Rudyard Kipling's "Without Benefit of Clergy," was a beautiful piece of literature; in its transcription to the screen, it fizzles. To begin with, Kipling's story lacks dramatic screen values; one knows at the very beginning, instinctively, that the clouds of tragedy cannot be brushed away, that the poor humans are too weak to combat the mighty forces that must inevitably overcome them. Now, these things are essentially and intrinsically true of all human struggle, but do not constitute the kind of drama that appeals to eternally hopeful humanity. From the outset, "Without Benefit of Clergy" is desolately pathetic, moving to its grim conclusion with all the melancholy somnolence of sublimely pitiful India.

It is an unhappy choice of screen material, for although Kipling himself scenarioized the story and James Young has given it a pure, literal rendering in production, the fact remains that "Without Benefit of Clergy," despite fascinating atmosphere, is almost utterly undramatic. It is unreasonable to attempt to translate most printed stories to the screen, an obvious fact that many producers are gradually awakening to. In order not to convey a misconception nor mince matters, "Without Benefit of Clergy" is a work of art with but few technical flaws, but is not a work of dramatic art. It is not even a drama of the human soul, for its moods and tempo are induced through scenic effects rather than through characterization.

The same American psychology that demands evenly matched baseball games or prize fights, will not respond to the hopeless note of this Kipling screen adaptation—which is artistic just

as Tschaikowsky's "Pathetique" symphony is. It seems strange that hard-headed American business men so far forewent their erstwhile sagacity as to produce this tragedy, which is surely not for the Yankee multitudes who love action and the never-say-die spirit. This is not a condemnation of American taste, but simply an implication that the great masses of all nations feel the need for hope and encouragement. Furthermore, a people will accept in literature what it will not accept on stage or screen; they do not expect to purchase biscuits at a florist shop. Kipling's name may give "Without Benefit of Clergy" some box-office impetus; but its lack of big situations, climaxes, crises, and its lack of humorous relief—so often a factor in poignant, moving drama—make it in toto a sad effort at sustained entertainment.

Synopsis—Behind the barred gate, in the House of Love, John Holden and Ameera lived a life of happiness secret from the world. He had saved her from an undesirable native suitor when her mother would have sold her, by paying her dowry. A native ceremony united them, and the joy of their life was a perfect thing.

When their little son, Tota, was five years old, he was stricken with fever and died. Their great sorrow drew them together in an even greater bond. Then came the drought. The cholera plague swept the land. Ameera refused to leave John and go to the hills, where she would have been safe, and she was one of the plague's thousands of victims.

After her death came the cooling, cleansing rains. It beat down walls and tore up roads. It wrecked the House of Love, which was torn down that a road might be built. All that Holden had loved was gone, leaving nothing but memories-

Black Roses

"Black Roses," one of the strongest photodramas Sessue Hayakawa ever appeared in, was filmed from a story written directly for the screen by E. Richard Schayer. Critics of the photoplay have been practically unanimous in declaring this cinema to be one of the most fascinating crook melodramas ever filmed. Schayer proves himself a first-rate photodramatist, who has charted out a story which opens at the heights of happiness, sinks to the depths of despair, then swings logically back to the heights. One of the most spectacular situations ever written into a scenario is the daring yet entirely plausible escape of the Japanese convict. The denouement is quite a melodramatic masterpiece in itself; the idea of a man being keen-witted and ingenuous enough to set a number of enemies bent upon his destruction against each other, if not entirely new in literature or the drama, is seldom ever employed. In fact, the way Mr. Schayer has evolved this denoument frankly goes Monte Cristo one better. The very finale is the consummation of intense cumulative interest, through situations that are genuinely breathtaking.

The element of suspense, as induced through Schayer's clever plot, is present throughout, riveting the attention from the opening scene to the final flicker; in fact, the hero's objectives—the recovery of his lost wife, the punishment of the murderers, and the clearing of his own name—are not attained until the final scenes. There are half a dozen strong characterizations, and the locales, atmosphere, and moods reflect the logical, trained screen writer. "Black Roses" is not only one of the most powerful melodramas ever written for the screen, but is produced with a keen sensitiveness to aesthetic and artistic values. Moreover, the acting of Hayakawa, Tsuru Aoki and Myrtle Stedman approaches the mountain peaks of histrionic art.

Synopsis—Benson Burleigh had dealt unscrupulously with the other members of a gang of polite criminals with which he had been associated. So much so that he had been able to retire to quiet respectability on a huge estate where he had all the known luxuries—including Yoda, a gardener who knew how to grow black roses. One day two former associates of Burleigh were ordered to murder him by Blanche Devore, notorious woman leader of crooks.

By a curious chain of circumstances the three criminals were able to pin the blame for the murder on Yoda. But to close the lips of Yoda's bride, Blossom, they were forced to carry her away. While she was transported to a virtual prison in Chinatown, New York, Yoda was sent to a penitentiary for murder. There a friendly convict aided him to make a sensational escape on a locomotive. He followed his enemies to New York. Posing as a Japanese nobleman, he fought a brilliant battle of wits which ended by their arrest, his own exoneration, and a reunion with his pretty little wife.

The Mother Heart

"The Mother Heart," a Fox production featuring Shirley Mason, was filmed from an original photoplay by Howard M. Mitchell. It is not a "big" story, nor was it ever intended for a super-cinema, but it is human to the core—with its little touches and its situations so true to the facts of every day life. Its theme, that of the innate motherliness of a pretty little youngster in her early teens, is treated sympathetically and—at times—delightfully. The little girl's devotion to the baby, under the most pitiable circumstances, is very touching, and calculated to reach to the most hardened cynic's heartstrings. All the characters in the story are commonplace, but intensely real; the plot is well handled and develops logically.

Fewer lavish spectacles and a greater abundance of these human stories of modern American life, is the screen's great need; no high and mighty effects are striven for in this photoplay, which seems more like real life than "reel" life, and is as refreshing as a clear spring morning or roses after rain. Young writers will do well to study the synopsis carefully, for the events and incidents related are the factors which affect the development of many of America's middle and poorer class families.

Synopsis—John Howard had been out of work so long that it was difficult to support his little family, consisting of his daughters, May and Ella, the baby and his wife. In order that Ella, a vain girl, might be enabled to attend high school and have all the things she wanted, May persuaded her parents to let her remain at home and do the work.

Howard, in dire straits, was forced to pawn their last article of value—an ivory clock, for which he received two dollars. He went with the money to a grocery, but when he prepared to pay for the supplies he had ordered he found that somebody had picked his pocket. In desperation, he seized the basket and hurried from

the store. The clerk reported the theft to the manager, who in turn notified the police. Howard was arrested, and May, seeing how grief-stricken her mother was, went to see George Stuart, owner of the store. Stuart, making ready to leave on a vacation, turned the case over to young Clifford Hamilton, the assistant manager.

Hamilton at first refused to do anything for May, but noting her youth and beauty, relented and made advances to her. Frightened, the girl fled from the office. The father was sentenced to ninety days in jail.

The disgrace killed May's mother, and the children were sent to an orphanage until the father's term should expire. But before that time Ella was adopted by a society woman, Mrs. Lincoln, because of her great resemblance to a daughter who had died.

The day Ella left the orphanage May had an offer to go into the country and keep house for an elderly gentleman. She accepted believing it would benefit the baby; besides, it would bring them near Ella, who was at Mrs. Lincoln's country home, not far away.

When May arrived at the country place, which happened to be George Stuart's, he was inclined to send her back immediately on account of her diminutive size and the baby. Billy Bender, who managed the farm, was able to arrange things, however, so that May and the baby stayed.

Stuart eventually grew very fond of his little family, and was more than pleased when he saw a romance ripening between May and Billy. In the meantime Clifford Hamilton, who had been losing heavily in the stock market, was a constant attendant on Ella, much against Mrs. Lincoln's wishes.

May, with a basket of home-cooked goodies on her arm, called on Ella—who, entertaining some wealthy friends, was much embarrassed by the call, and told May she must not come again.

May returned home heart broken, followed by Hamilton, who again tried to force his attentions on her, being interrupted by Billy. The noise of the quarrel between the two young men brought Stuart. He promptly discharged Hamilton, after the latter insinuated that May was the reason for Stuart remaining at the farm. Billy, before Hamilton left, told May that the man who sent her father to jail was Hamilton. When May learned that Stuart was the owner of the grocery she hastily packed up and made ready to leave; but Stuart and Billy, anxious that she should stay, refused to surrender the baby.

In the midst of May's appeals John Howard, just released from prison, walked in. Stuart hastily explained, and Howard forgave him—as did May.

Meanwhile Hamilton, frantic over the loss of his job, persuaded Ella to consent to elope with him; but his scheme was defeated by detectives who arrested him for embezzlement of ten thousand dollars.

That night Ella came to the humble farmhouse to beg May's forgiveness for her treatment, and the little family were reunited, with Billy shyly taking part in the festivities, but keeping close to May.

"Home Talent"

Mack Sennett's five-reel slapstick masterpiece! That's what "Home Talent" is—by far the best feature length comedy Sennett has made since "Tillie's Punctured Romance." There is a sustained theme, and even a plot! The screen writer who can even approximate this slapstickian perfection could easily command a five figure check for the achievement. Although the story is not credited to anyone, it was probably concocted by the Emperor of Mirth himself. The sub-titles have never been equalled as laugh evokers; the one about Ben Turpin's uncle meeting an untimely death while indulging in a favorite eccentricity of entering people's homes en masque, caused an outburst of wild glee that reverberated to the very dome of the theatre.

In a spirit of hilarious comedy the plot opens, introducing a quartet of stranded vaudeville performers in a country hotel, where they can neither remain nor leave. They owe the landlord too much money.

Their acts are a score of years behind the time—almost as old as their board bill and the exhibition of their "stunts" supplies much of the early and ingenious comedy. After a furious quarrel between the two "teams," a reconciliation is effected and they decide under Ben Turpin's leadership to pool their talents and put forth a great show. At once they enter into rehearsals, calling in the help of the hotel-man's daughter, who, it turns out, is more beautiful than she looks in her scullery clothes.

The rehearsals, in the presence of the landlord, supply the central episodes of the production and are the most beautiful sequences of scenes ever screened.

The slave mart of ancient Rome is shown wherein more than a hundred beautiful captives are brought.

Out of these episodes Phyllis Haver emerges in a radiance of loveliness not often duplicated on the screen, rounding out a picture of unusual beauty—as well as humor.



IN WRITING photoplays it is wise to not draw your villains from folks who live in your old home town. You might want to go back some day. Remember, photoplays are shown everywhere.



FATE is still capricious. You may have not sold a story in six months—perhaps you have yet to sell one—when suddenly the Day of Days arrives. And the greatness of that Day in your eyes will be in exact ratio to the length of your period of unrequited wooing of the editors.

Questions Answered

Concerning the Writing of Photoplays

Q. Why are my stories rejected by agents and studios while so many that are being produced and exhibited are weaker in dramatic qualities and entertainment values than mine?—H. J. W.

A. First, are you sure that the productions you see in the theatres *are* inferior to the stories that you write? It is no more than human to believe that the children of one's imagination are of superior quality. Are you sure that you test your photodramatic plots thoroughly for all the fundamental values that are necessary in order to make a manuscript salable? It is a good plan to assume that a story has been written by someone else—then attack it with the most destructive criticism and the most cold-blooded analysis at your command. Tear it to shreds as though you were dealing with a story written by an utter stranger. Are the characters human and convincing? Are the situations dramatic and do they follow, one after another in logical sequence? Is the interest of an audience likely to be held from the beginning to the end through sheer suspense? Is the final climax strong? Are the events throughout novel and will they get at the heartstrings of your audience? Have no mercy on yourself or your story. It is this unyielding self-criticism that makes real craftsmen.

Q. I have been trying to write salable scenarios for over a year and am about discouraged. Do you think there is any use in keeping up my work?—R. W. P.

A. The creation of screen dramas embodies the eighth of the fine arts. What successful artist painted and sold a fine picture within a year after starting to study art? What poet ever attained success in less than twelve months? What is the history of the average novelist, short-story writer or dramatist? Study, hard work, persistance! If you really desire to become a photodramatist you will keep at your work until you have achieved success, provided you possess sufficient imagination, dramatic perception and patience. But if you permit yourself to become discouraged you will fail without question.

Q. Why do producers of photoplays insist on "happy endings" to practically all the screen dramas that are shown?

A. Because audiences in general prefer "happy endings." It seems to be natural for the average normal person to look at life hopefully—to believe that things are going to turn out well and not ill; to feel that they are going to succeed in any endeavor rather than fail; that no matter what may happen, they are going to be happy. In witnessing a photodrama each member of the audience places himself or herself in the place of the principal man or woman in the story. They hope and struggle with the character that is hoping and struggling; they find joy in triumph and sadness in defeat. Most of us prefer joy to sadness. Frankly, many otherwise strong dramas are spoiled artistically by the use of a happy ending when a different sort of finish would be more natural. Exhibitors and producers are seeking to please the greater proportion of their audiences, however, hence the prevalence of the optimistic termination of most of the screen dramas.

Q. It seems to me that the interest in photoplays is decreasing. What is the use of spending time writing scenarios if moving pictures are to be a thing of the past in a short time. I think the speaking stage is coming back and that people will resume their old-time habits of reading fiction.

A. The screen will be the most universal medium of artistic expression long after all of us now living are dead and gone. This is not a matter of conjecture or personal opinion—it is a fact conceeded by the best thinkers of all nations. The photodrama will never take the place of the stage or of printed fiction. The motion picture is a new, separate and distinct means of expression. Being so universal, reaching, as it does, every race of people in every nook and corner of the earth regardless of tongue or literacy, you may be sure that it will endure as one of the important institutions of modernity just as long as the book or the stage. People are not tiring of motion pictures; they are becoming weary of some of the inferior junk that has been foisted upon them by producers of indifferent ideals. This situation is righting itself almost automatically. Producers are seeking a better quality of screen stories and are using their best efforts to give audiences the sort of photodramas that will hold their interest and enthusiasm. The whole future of the screen depends upon the efforts of the men and women who become craftsmen in photodramatic construction and who use their brains in creating strong screen dramas. The coming generation of photodramatists will give us stories of a quality that have not been dreamed of up to date.

Q. Do producers pay royalties to photoplaywrights as well as flat sums for their stories?

A. Royalties have been paid in very few instances up to this time. Efforts are being made by influential photodramatists to bring about a system of royalties such as exists in the relationship of dramatists and the producers of stage dramas. There is little doubt but royalties will be paid to writers of screen dramas eventually—it is merely a question of how long it will take to establish the custom. The dramatist who writes and has produced one or two successful stage plays enjoys an income that soon mounts into a substantial fortune and there is no reason why photodramatists should not enjoy the same remuneration for the product of their brains. The motion picture art is so comparatively new that all of these things have to be worked out slowly—but they are being worked out surely.

Hints from the Studios

Compiled by Alfred A. Cohn and Kate Corbaley of the Palmer Sales Department

Society Drama—There are several young women of the Patrician type who are very desirous of obtaining stories pertaining to the upper social strata; these stories must be so constructed as to maintain the greater amount of sympathy for the leading female character. One particular, dark haired, exotic girl star is anxious to be launched in a story approximating the De Mille society type; she is one of the best known stars in filmdom and the organization she is under contract to is sympathetic toward "original" screen stories. She has yet to be featured in a society drama, but is ideally suited for this type.

Super-Features—There is still a welcome market for the truly big story which is one of two things: an intensely human, perhaps intimate theme, intrinsically dramatic; or a story with strong characterizations and physical action.

One-Reel Comedies—Replete with action, such as the time-worn chases, but must have original "gags." Domestic type preferred to slapstick.

Westerns—One company is quite anxious for a story for a male star, with prominent part for eight year old boy whom they believe is a "Find." Many of the companies are making two-reel westerns today, and a few are indifferent as to where the story is laid, as long as it is a virile, outdoor story.

Foreign Types—Two female stars are anxious for stories of foreign types in American settings; must be seriously conceived.

Rural Stories—Small town and country roles are in demand by a well known male star; preferably middle west or New England locale.

Kentucky Mountains—A certain young male star, who hails from the Blue Grass country, is soon to be launched in a series of out-door dramatic five-reelers. He would like to faithfully interpret his own people, and will carefully consider any story written by the *cognoscenti* around this environment.

Comedy Dramas—There seems to be no abating the demand for comedy dramas, and especially ingenue or juvenile comedy dramas. There is hardly a studio of any size that hasn't at least one bubbling personality in its midst who looms to advantage in the light, frothy, happy stuff.

Old Man—Did you ever stop to think what salient successes Frank Bacon in "Lightnin'," Joe Jefferson in "Rip Van Winkle" and the Warfield plays have been? Someone has yet to write the screen masterpiece of life's fading days. Two leading film organizations have character actors whom they would like to feature in just such a type of story.

Two-Reel Slapstick Comedies—For some time most of the companies making slapstick comedies preferred to either make them them up as they went along or at least preferred that they be brewed within the studio walls. However, there are no less than four comedy companies sending out steady S. O. S. signals for slap-stick stuff; however, three of them insist on it being written in continuity form, with "gags" clearly indicated and explained.

Special Demand—One scenario editor would be interested in an intimate human story dealing with the love of two diametrically opposite types of men for a girl; neither man would be of a villainous charter, but one would be athletic, rugged, lusty, hale—the other slight, aesthetic, abstracted. The athletic fellow would be handsome, good humored, a typical ladies' favorite; the other man a moody, almost introspective type with few sentimental experiences to his credit. However, in the denouement of the story, the anaemic fellow would triumph through a finer, deeper character which asserted itself in a situation which the big, good looking fellow couldn't rise to. As most of the stories written by "favorite" American authors glorify physical supremacy, the scenario editor in question thinks such a story as is suggested would prove refreshingly different and might even prove popular—providing it was handled sincerely, with perhaps the physically strong man winning the sympathy until the very climax, which could turn on some big mo-

ment in which a higher sense of values was demanded. Of course, the girl in such a story would have to be cultured, artistic, intellectual—with her problem that of deciding between her emotional inclination towards the strong, congenial, popular man, and the realization of the little man's sensitiveness to deeper, finer beauty and higher intellectual values.

Northwestern—There is some demand for two and five reel photoplays dealing with the Royal Northwest Mounted Police.

Irish-American—Breezy, romantic Irish-American stories are in demand at one of studios.

Ingenue Drama—It's still in heavy demand. Look at the Realart aggregation of flappers—Wanda Hawley, Bebe Daniels, Justine Johnstone, Mary Miles Minter, et al.—and you can see the reason.

Male Leads—Men stars who do things, are increasing as leads. Have you a story which would demand a mixture of McLean and Charley Ray, with plenty of acting incorporated therein? It is needed. Two stars want vigorous, out-of-doors material which is not so-called Western. A famous male star wants rugged stories, with plenty of action. But the action must be the natural outcome of genuine theme development. He can do dress, woodland or seashore stories, but all must carry vigor. Several companies are asking for westerns with real plots behind them, but no stories based on crime will be considered.

General Remarks—There is still a market for the first year of marriage stories and business girl romances, as well as for stories of the sea, all in the five reel medium.



The Photoplay Market

Supplied exclusively to The Photodramatist by the Sales Department of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation.

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Owing to the frequent changes in studio personnel, no addresses of the stars are given herewith. Full information may be obtained by addressing Photoplay Sales Department, Palmer Photoplay Corporation, Los Angeles, California.

This agency, being in close daily contact with studios and market conditions, is equipped to obtain quicker and more satisfactory results than the free-lance photodramatist can obtain for himself. Long experience has proved the superiority of the reliable marketing bureau. Furthermore, it will be found that some of the producing organizations do not maintain reading staffs, and will return manuscripts unread. They do, however, in almost every instance, consider manuscripts submitted to them by recognized agencies, for they know that such scripts have had a careful reading, possibly a revision, and are of a type suited to their requirements.

FIVE-REEL DRAMA —FEMALE LEAD

May Allison
Theda Bara
Betty Blythe
Alice Brady
Alice Calhoun
Catherine Calvert
Ora Carew
Irene Castle
Helen Chadwick
Mildred Harris Chaplin
Naomi Childers
Ethel Clayton
Betty Compson
Viola Dana
Marion Davies
Priscilla Dean
Eleanor Faire
Elsie Ferguson
Pauline Frederick
Lillian Gish
Corinne Griffith
Vera Gordon
Edith Hallor
Elaine Hammerstein
Juanita Hansen
Wanda Hawley
Alice Joyce
Alice Lake
Florence Lawrence
Louise Lovely
Katherine MacDonald
Vivian Martin
Mae Marsh
May McAvoy
Mary Miles Minter
Carmel Myers
Alla Nazimova
Eva Novak
Jean Paige
Eileen Percy
Mary Pickford
Dorothy Phillips
Ruby de Remer
Florence Reed
Irene Rich
Edith Roberts
Ruth Roland
Teddy Sampson
Gloria Swanson
Mabel Julienne Scott
Eileen Sedgwick
Anita Stewart
Blanche Sweet
Norma Talmadge
Rosemary Theby
Florence Vidor
Gladys Walton
Lois Weber
Pearl White
Clara Kimball Young

FIVE-REEL DRAMA —MALE LEAD

John Barrymore
Lionel Barrymore
Hobart Bosworth
William Desmond
Elliott Dexter
William Farnum
Sessue Hayakawa
Gareth Hughes
Lloyd Hughes
Thomas Jefferson
J. Warren Kerrigan
James Kirkwood
Montague Love
Bert Lytell
Frank Mayo
Thomas Meighan
Owen Moore
Tom Moore
Antonio Moreno
Harry Myers
Eugene O'Brien
Tyrone Power
Joe Rahn
Charles Ray
William Russell
Joe Ryan
Milton Sills
Conway Tearle
H. B. Warner

FIVE-REEL COMEDY-DRAMA —FEMALE LEAD

May Allison
Billie Burke
June Caprice
Marguerite Clark
Viola Dana
Bebe Daniels
Dorothy Gish
Wanda Hawley
Justine Johnson
Mollie King
Doris May
Mary Miles Minter
Mary Pickford
Constance Talmadge

FIVE-REEL COMEDY-DRAMA —MALE LEAD

Roscoe Arbuckle
Douglas Fairbanks
Carter de Haven
Johnny Jones
Douglas MacLean
Tom Moore
Charles Ray
Wallace Reid
Bryant Washburn

FIVE-REEL COMEDY

Charlie Chaplin
Max Linder
Charles Murray
Kala Pasha
Ben Turpin

FIVE-REEL WESTERN

Art Acord
Harry Carey
Lester Cuneo
William Duncan
Jack Drum
Ray Gallagher
Neal Hart
Jack Hoxie
Tom Mix
Pete Morrison
Antonio Moreno
Will Rogers
Tom Santchi
Russell Simpson

THREE-REEL COMEDY

Harold Lloyd

TWO-REEL COMEDY —FEMALE LEAD

Vloria Daniel
Dorothy Devore
Louise Fazenda
Phyllis Haver
Irene Hunt
Pearl Shepard
Edna Shipman

TWO-REEL COMEDY —MALE LEAD

Jimmie Adamas
Alexander Alt
Jimmy Aubrey
Monty Banks
George Bunny
Charlie Chaplin
Chester Conklin
Clyde Cook
Bud Duncan
Neely Edwards
Harry Gribben
Lloyd Hamilton
Ham Hamilton
Buster Keaton
Jack Livingston
Harold Lloyd
Hank Mann
Harry McCoy
Lee Moran
Charles Murray
Kala Pasha
Larry Semon
Sid Smith
Ford Sterling
Harry Swett
Ben Turpin
Bobbie Vernon
Jack White
Leo White

TWO-REEL WESTERN —FEMALE LEAD

Josephine Hill
Helen Holmes
Fritzie Ridgway

TWO-REEL WESTERN —MALE LEAD

Art Acord
F. Braidwood
William Fairbanks
C. E. Hatton
J. B. Warner

ONE-REEL COMEDY

Ida Allen
Eddie Boland
Billy Fletcher
Gaylord Lloyd
Harry Mann
George Ovey
Snub Pollard
Harry Pollard
Rex Story

SERIAL

Ann Little
Ruth Roland
Antonio Moreno
Eddie Polo
William Russell



MR. MEEHAN doubted his ability; but *"I have been shown!"* he says. Will you send for the test he took, FREE?

He sold two stories the first year

THIS sentence from J. Leo Meehan's letter to the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, tells the whole story:

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But it would not be fair to you to end the story there. It is interesting to know that a young man in an underpaid job was able to sell two photoplays and attach himself to a big producer's studio in one year; that a few weeks ago he was retained by Gene Stratton Porter to dramatize her novels for the screen. But if you have ever felt as you left a theatre, "Why, *I* could write a better story than that," you want to know just *how Mr. Meehan went about it* to become a successful photoplaywright in one short year.

He was doubtful when he enrolled, but he wrote that he was "willing to be shown." And with complete confidence in Mr. Meehan's ability, the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, whose test he had to pass before he was acceptable, undertook to convince him.

The rest was a simple matter of training. The Course and Service merely taught him how to use, for screen purposes, the natural story-telling ability which we discovered in him.

You, too, may doubt your ability

At the outset, let us correct one false notion that is keeping many talented men and women from trying to write for the screen. Literary skill, or fine writing ability, is not necessary—it cannot be transferred to the screen. What the industry needs is *good stories*—stories that spring from creative imagination and a sense of the dramatic. *Any person who has that gift can be trained to write for the screen.*

But, you say—just as Mr. Meehan said—how can I know whether I have the ability?

To answer that question is the purpose of this advertisement. The Palmer Photoplay Corporation will gladly apply to you a scientific test of story-telling ability—the test Mr. Meehan passed—provided you are an adult and in earnest. And, notice this particularly, we shall do it free.

Send for the Van Loan questionnaire

The test is in the form of a questionnaire prepared for the Palmer Photoplay Corporation by H. H. Van Loan, the celebrated photoplaywright, and Prof. Malcolm MacLean, former teacher of short story writing at Northwestern University. If you have any story telling instinct, send for this questionnaire and find out for yourself just how much talent you have.

We shall be frank with you; have no fear. The Palmer Photoplay Corporation exists first of all to *sell photoplays*. It trains photoplay writers in order that it may have more photoplays to sell. It is not in business to hold out false promise to those who can never succeed.

With the active aid and encouragement of the leading producers, the Corporation is literally combing the country for new screen writers. Its Department of Education was organized for one purpose and one only—to develop and produce the writers who can produce the stories. The Palmer institution is the industry's accredited agent for getting the stories without which production of motion pictures cannot go on.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation cannot endow you with the gift of story-telling. But we can discover it, if it exists, through our questionnaire. And we can train you to employ it for your lasting enjoyment and profit.

We invite you to apply this free test

Clip the coupon below, and we will send you the Van Loan questionnaire. You assume no obligation, but you will be asked to be prompt in returning the completed test for examination. If you pass the test, we shall send you interesting material descriptive of the Palmer Course and Service, and admit you to enrollment, should you choose to develop your talent. If you cannot pass this test, we will frankly advise you to give up the idea of writing for the screen. It will be a waste of their time and ours for children to apply.

This questionnaire will take only a little of your time. It may mean fame and fortune to you. In any event it will satisfy you as to whether or not you should attempt to enter this fascinating and highly profitable field. Just use the coupon below—and do it now before you forget.

PALMER PHOTOPLAY Corporation, Department, of Education
I. W. Hellman Building, Los Angeles, California

PLEASE SEND ME, without cost or obligation on my part, your questionnaire. I will answer the questions in it and return it to you for analysis. If I pass the test, I am to receive further information about your Course and Service.

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SEPTEMBER, 1921 25 Cents

THE PHOTOPLAY DRAMATIST



1922 WILL REWARD SCREEN WRITERS

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and

ARTICLES BY:

Marshall Neilan
Rob Wagner
Earl Percy
Thomas H. Ince
Maurice Tourneur
Allan Dwan
Mack Sennett
G. Harrison Wylie
J. L. Frothingham
—and others

See Page 6 for News of the $30,000 Scenario Contest

COVER DESIGN: SCENE FROM PARAMOUNT'S "THE GREAT MOMENT"

Davis F. Schwartz



Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle coronatyping at the Lehrman Studios, California.

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The PHOTODRAMATIST



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THE OCTOBER NUMBER

Will contain articles by Rex Ingram, Gertrude Nelson Andrews, Thompson Buchanan, Paul Bern, Jas. R. Quirk, Monte Katterjohn and L. Hervey Parker—and an interview with C. Gardner Sullivan.

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Watch for Articles by—

Sir Gilbert Parker, Cecil B. DeMille, Alice Eyton, June Mathis, Jack Cunningham, Beulah Marie Dix, Bradley King, Frances Harmer, Frank X. Finnegan, Doris Schroeder, Olga Printzlau, Lorna Moon, Paul Schofield, Agnes Parsons, Mildred Considine, Harry R. Brand, and Jeanie MacPherson.

IN FUTURE NUMBERS OF

The PHOTODRAMATIST

Now is the time to subscribe; articles by several authors of international note will soon be announced; you can't afford to miss the coming good things.

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STUDENTS OF SCREEN WRITING MUST NOT MISS "HAIL THE WOMAN", A THOS. H. INCE SPECIAL— YOUR LOCAL EXHIBITOR WILL TELL YOU PLAYING DATES

C. Gardner Sullivan's "Hail the Woman" is now nearing completion at the Thos. H. Ince Studios. This play is the crowning achievement of this master photodramatist.

Motherly devotion—sacrifice—the all-conquering love of a clean man for a sweet girl—the unbending autocracy of a God-fearing husband and father—these are some of the elements that are woven into the most gripping, the most *startling* drama that has come from the Sullivan pen.

In this sensational story the student will find a notable example of the ability of the trained screen dramatist to achieve strong dramatic conflict without a shot being fired; without a hand-to-hand struggle; without a physical blow being struck; without a "crook" in the plot. No novel could be more captivating or more gripping than this latest Sullivan screen play. A great photodramatist, a great cast and a great producer have combined to make "Hail the Woman" an epic in cinema history.

SEPTEMBER, 1921
Volume III. No. 4.

SEP 14 '21

Official Organ of the Screen Writers' Guild
of the Authors' League of America

The PHOTODRAMATIST

Don't Be a Herd Animal

By Rob Wagner



IT is but natural that we trail success. Chaplin appears; instantly a deluge of Chaplins. Charlie Ray makes a big hit in a bucolic role; righto, he is sentenced to play nothing but "hicks." "Humoresque" scores; mother love is straight-away seized upon by the scenario hounds, or—more likely—ordered by the producer. "The Miracle Man" turns 'em away; follows an avalanche of miracle women, children, cats and dogs. Zorro goes over; the movie world splashes up to its poles in romance.

Yet, it is but natural that we trail success. But why not use a little wit in analyzing what made these successes. Beginning with Chaplin: the failure of his imitators shows plainly enough it was *not* his pants and shoes; without his brains and artistry they are merely props. Was it the hick role that endeared the people to Ray? Not at all; it was his profound psychological understanding of the unspoiled man, and such men are not indigenous only to Indiana farms, but may be found in every walk of life. Was it "mother love" that put over "Humoresque"? No, mother love had been done a million times, but "Humoresque" was done well, that is all. And the "Miracle Man"? It was simply a rather mawkish story magnificently done. And "Zorro"? Merely a popular star in something, for him, refreshingly new.

The herd instinct is one of the curses of art. Time was when our best illustrated humor was made in a single picture, but twenty years ago two famous cartoonists adopted a movie technic and showed their joke in a series of pictures, beginning at the left-hand upper corner of the page and ending with a splash in the diagonal corner. This was the most childishly elemental way of telling a story, but since those first great successes the "comic strip" has become the accepted method of expressing our native humor.

And so with the photodrama. Even in the face of the rising tide of censorship, if some one put out a perfectly wonderful vamp story that made a million dollars, we would instantly have a renaissance of that sad theme, and most of the copies would fail utterly.

Another reason for avoiding the copy-catechism of the unoriginal is the embarrassing length of time it takes to trail a success, for by the time we have released our copy the taste for the theme may have changed entirely.

Themes are few and hoary with age, so if you wish to trail success don't copy the theme, but study the method of its development. Successes are successes because they are well done, and for no other reason.



The $30,000 Scenario Contest

National in Scope

ON the first page of the Chicago Daily News for Monday, August 22nd, appeared the details of the most astounding scenario contest ever launched. Here are the wonderful facts, reprinted verbatim from "The News":

"The Daily News, in co-operation with the Goldwyn Film Company, today inaugurates the most extensive motion picture scenario contest ever held.

"This contest, at the close of which there will be awarded $30,000 in prizes to the writers of the thirty-one best scenarios entered, is dedicated to the belief, shared by all leading picture makers, that amateur scenario writers, with proper advice and encouragement, can produce quantities of strong vivid stories, real life scenarios that will give needed stimulus to the work of permanently establishing moving pictures as one of the great American contributions to art. THE CONTEST WILL BE NATIONAL IN SCOPE. No one will be excluded except employees of The Daily News and The Goldwyn Company."

THE PRIZES

First Prize.....$10,000.

10 Second Prizes, each $1000.

20 Third Prizes, each.....$500.

Every contestant must register with the Scenario Contest Editor of The Chicago Daily News, 15 N. Wells street, Chicago, Ill., before sending in his scenario.

Goldwyn guarantees to film the winning scenario. The prizes offered are as follows: First prize, $10,000; ten second prizes, each $1,000; twenty third prizes, each $500. While production is guaranteed only to the scenario that wins the first prize of $10,000, it is expected that many of the second and third groups will be filmed. According to The News, "picture men expect a quantity of usable material to appear even in the lists of those that receive no prizes." The contest will close November 1.

Some of the most distinguished figures in Filmland have been chosen as judges of the contest. The jury which will select the winning scenarios is composed of David Wark Griffith, Samuel Goldwyn, Norma Talmadge, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Rupert Hughes, Gertrude Atherton, Gouverneur Morris, and Amy Leslie.

Here are the rules of the contest, condensed:

Manuscripts must be of not more than 5,000 words, etc.; must be in typewritten form or in legible handwriting, written on one side of paper only. All manuscripts must be in the hands of the Chicago Daily News by November 1, 1921. No manuscripts will be returned. The Daily News will take every precaution to safeguard all entered scenarios, but will not be responsible for lost manuscripts. No two prizes will be given to a single contestant. Contestants assign all copyrights to The Daily News.

The following is reprinted verbatim from the News, as a possible guide:

"No limit is placed on subject or style of manuscripts. Contestants are reminded, however, that stories which conform to published hints and directions of film experts will be more likely to receive favorable notice from the judges than will those which do not so conform.

"The contest is inaugurated at this time because the hour is particularly suited to the success of amateur authors. All the progressive companies are straining now to discover promising scenario writers. Films are

(Continued on Page 38)

The Guild Forum

A monthly department devoted to the interests of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America, the official organization of recognized photodramatists and studio staff writers.

By Alfred Hustwick

The Screen Writers' Guild

OFFICERS

Frank E. Woods, President.
June Mathis, Vice-President.
Eugene Presbrey, Treasurer and Executive Secretary.
Dwight Cleveland, Recording Secretary.

Executive Committee

The officers and Thompson Buchanan, Elmer Harris, A. S. LeVino, Jeanie MacPherson, Frederick Palmer, Elmer Rice, Rob Wagner.

OF ALL the hoary-headed traditions which have surrounded the unfortunate writer and worked him incalculable harm none has been more troublesome than the superstition that a creative artist cannot possibly be a good business man. The attitude of the business man towards the individual who lives by the product of his imagination has always been patronizing, to say the least. He has considered the word "author" a synonym for "easy mark" and has produced the evidence from history. But these are different times from those of poor Noll Goldsmith, and the gentlemen who buy the products of the author have learned that he is developing business acumen along with his gifts of fancy.

The last nail in the coffin of this ancient impostor has been driven in well and hard by the Screen Writers' Guild. No longer will the weary jokesmith gibe at "improvident improvisors, ignorant of all values save literary ones." No more will the man of business rub his hands in gleeful anticipation of fat profits when the corrugated brow of the scribe hovers above the wares of his counter. Commerce can take notice that Art will no longer suffer its contemptuous exploitation. The Muse has learned the arithmetic table.

If anyone has doubts let him mosey over to the corner of Las Palmas and Sunset, look over the clubhouse and grounds, and then digest the following facts: The holding corporation was formed by members of the Guild to make possible the formation of The Writers, the screen writers' club. Its capital is $50,000, one thousand shares at $50 par. Up to date members of the Guild have subscribed the neat sum of $20,000, not so bad when the internal history of the picture industry this year is considered. From this amount the initial payments upon the purchase of the clubhouse and grounds have been made and very advantageous terms arranged for the balance. In addition to the beautiful home, which is now being remodelled for club purposes, and its truly enchanting grounds, the corporation has purchased another large lot, approximately 142 feet by 210 feet, fronting on Leland Way and connecting with the gardens of the club. Upon this latest acquisition it is intended to install two full-sized cement tennis courts, a 75-foot swimming pool with what Eugene Presbrey calls "all necessary aquatic appurtenances," a handball court, a practice green for golfing enthusiasts, a rest porch, and an adequate number of showers and dressing rooms.

All this is for the use of the club, and is to be accomplished without increasing the capitalization of the holding corporation. Does this sound like good business? Let the publicity hound rave on awhile. The holding company picked up the first of the clubhouse property at a tremendous bargain, $30,000 to be exact. If it wanted to sell in a hurry it could get not less than $40,000—it has been offered that much. But professional appraisers value the buildings, conservatively, at $27,000, and the grounds, figured against unimproved property in the vicinity which has recently changed hands, must be worth, with their improvements, enough to bring the total valuation nearer $50,000 than $40,000. It is pretty safe to say that the holding corporation has acquired property with a market value of fifty thousand dollars for an in-

vestment of thirty thousand. Not so bad for a bunch of *writers!*

With the addition of the athletic grounds, soon to be equipped, the holdings of the corporation will have a market value far in excess of its total capitalization and the par value of its stock will undoubtedly greatly increase in value as the development of Hollywood continues. Right now, if the holding company were to offer its remaining stock for general subscription, far-sighted investors would gobble it up. But the idea is to keep this stock in the hands of club members. The Sunset and Las Palmas Corporation is a Guild concern, all its stockholders are members of the Guild, and the Guild and its club will be its tenants. It would be a pity to see the remaining stock, offering such a wonderful chance for profitable investment, get away from the club members, and it isn't the intention of the holding corporation to let it away from them. In the language of the promoter's prospectus, "now is the time to get in on the ground floor." The shares are $50 each, payable 30% down and 10% of the purchase price monthly. It's not alone a matter of loyalty to the Guild and its club, but an opportunity to acquire an interest-bearing stock, already worth more than its par value and bound to keep on increasing. And it's a further chance for every screen writer to prove the truth of our claim that screen writers can be good writers and good business men at one and the same time.

Getting Ready

Work is progressing rapidly at the clubhouse. The decorating and remodelling are well advanced. Already the lounge and library have undergone transformation and the exquisite color scheme, Florentine grey with bronze trimmings, captivates the visitor. Furniture is being chosen, some of it being made to order. The library committee is already securing donations and expects to fill the available shelves just as soon as the members realize the need of sending in their spare volumes. Rob Wagner is designing a bookplate for the club books which will have a place for the recording of the donor's name. Complete sets are especially desired. Every screen writer knows what will be useful—the kind of books he finds most necessary to his own work will be the kind that other writers will appreciate. General fiction, classics, reference books and treatises on special subjects will find a place of honor on the shelves.

Perhaps He's Right!

Last month it was mentioned, quite incidentally, that The Writers, besides being the first screen writers' club to exist, would be the Western branch and quarters of the Authors' League of America, where every visiting member of the league would be a welcome and honored guest. A prominent member of the league, now visiting in California, expresses himself as "completely flabbergasted by the ambitious program which you screen writers have undertaken." He is moved to jocular comment upon the fact that "the Screen Writers' Guild not only accomplishes more for the writer on this coast than the League has accomplished for him in the East but, to top it all, the year-old infant notifies the parent organization that it has already established something that the League itself has never achieved, a comfortable home for its members." And he adds the prophecy, cum grano salis, "before many moons have waxed and waned Southern California will be the literary center of the continent and The Writers will be the most remarkable club in the world."

Short Subjects

Thompson Buchanan, chairman of the club committee, wants to tell the world that organizing The Writers is no easy job. The committee is driving right along and has already submitted a tentative draft of by-laws to the council and executive committee. The grand opening of the club is going to be a big event and everybody concerned in the preparations is working to make The Writers a success from the beginning. The date when the club will formally throw open its doors will be announced in the next issue of The Photodramatist.

It has been definitely decided that the regular monthly meeting of the council will be held at the clubhouse on the SECOND Wednesday of each month, at 8 p. m., instead of the first Wednesday as stated in the last budget of club news. The first of these regular council meetings took place on the 10th inst., and the business was chiefly confined to discussion of club plans and bylaws. There was a bare quorum present, but it is hoped that the attendance will be larger at the next meeting, September 7th, as there will undoubtedly be a large agenda.

Elmer Rice is leaving soon for New York to be gone for an indefinite period. The executive committee accepted Mr. Rice's resignation as chairman of the legal committee with regret. Albert LeVino succeeds.

Conversations

II. On Interior Decorations

Set Down by Beverly Glenn

(With Apologies to George Jean Hatteras and Major Mencken)

Scene: Club House of the Screen Writers' Guild.

Persons: Rob Wagner, Chairman of the Art Committee and a critical lady visitor, afflicted with the assurance of the misinformed and the persistence of the uninspired.

Critical Visitor

"I can't say that I like the way the Club House is being re-decorated. It lacks, er—ah—*verve.* I was looking at a bungalow the other day and every room sort of stood out with individuality. The dining room had wall paper with pond lilies, one bedroom had great clusters of grapes, and so on. It was, as William Morris used to say, very *Roycroftie,* if you get me."

Wagner

"Yes, I get you. But I scarcely think that water lilies and grapes would be just the thing here. We have been striving for simplicity and balance on one hand, and cheerful color on the other. I think you will like the results as a whole after the work is finished. How do you like the Georgian motif in this room?"

C. V.

Well—not ba-a-d. My husband's folks are Southerners, though they don't live in Georgia. Why wouldn't a bust of President Harding go good in that corner? And some rag rugs?"

Wagner

"Oh, no! These Sheraton and Adam pieces would lose their artistic value.

C. V.

"Sheraton and Adams? Where are they located? In Hollywood? I supposed this furniture was real antique stuff. Say, a Navajo blanket would be striking in here, don't you think?"

Wagner

"Yes, it *would* be *striking.* This William and Mary sideboard was presented to the Club, but there seems to be no really appropriate place for it."

C. V.

(Who has been examining a painting.) "What? Oh, Douglas and Mary. *Wasn't* that sweet of them? Say, I don't like this picture. It looks like something from a second-hand store."

Wagner

"Oh, my, my! That once hung in the Louvre—it is the best thing we have in the Club House."

C. V.

"In the Louvre! Takes you back to the good old days, eh! I have been in Tait's and I went through the Barbary Coast, but I stopped in 'Frisco only one day, so I didn't get to go into the Louvre. Well, I suppose it's all right for sentimental reasons. Looks as if it was damaged during the big earthquake. When the Club can afford it you ought to have some of the Old Masters. I love Rosa Bonheur and Paul De Longpre. This wall is mildewed, isn't it?"

Wagner

"Why, no—not exactly. It's intended to be that way. It will look different when the furniture is arranged and the lighting is completed."

C. V.

"Well, I guess you know what you are doing, all right, but I like bright colors—lots of life. There's some red carpet in the Alexandria Hotel—"

Wagner

(Beginning to assume a hunted look.) "Yes, I know. But you see we have a preconceived scheme of color harmony, and red would clash terribly. Don't you see how we have even had the piano refinished in order that it will blend with the walls and woodwork?"

C. V.

"Well, I love red anywhere, or at least the brightest colors. When I was in New York I saw a piano completely covered with gold leaf in the Waldorf Astoria. It looked so *rich* and *refined*. Has the Club a coat-of-arms? It would be classy to have one on your stationery and silverware and all. I had an artist at home—Des Moines, you know—design one for me and I use it on everything. It has a lion, rampage, and garlands of roses. My husband is a wholesaler in garden seeds, and the roses seem very appropriate, don't you think? This bedroom is pretty. What a nice frame on that painting!"

Wagner

"Frame? Oh, yes. That is an Italian Renaissance picture. We have tried to adhere to the Italian influence throughout this room."

C. V.

"Indeed? Wouldn't it be cute to have an enlarged picture of George Beban in here? Isn't he Italian or Portuguese, or something of that sort?"

Wagner

(Weakening rapidly.) "But he is not a member of the Guild, you see."

C. V.

"Well, I must be going. Oh, what pretty colors in here!"

Wagner

(Desperate.) "Yes, we like the combination of jade green, Sun-Kist orange and Stanford White." (There is no orange in the room, but the Critical Visitor does not notice it.)

C. V.

"Thanks ever so much for showing me around, Mr. er—Wagenthal."

Wagner

(Too numb to be offended.) "Good-bye." (To Japanese servant, after the Critical Visitor has made her exit.) "Nogi, who is she?"

Nogi

"She Honorable Missus of man that sell valuable flower-vegatibles for Club grounds and tennis-court room. She talk slightly Victrola."

Wagner

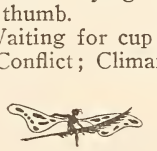
"Oh, Lord! I thought she was a relative of some member who couldn't help it. And I'm forty-five minutes late for dinner. 'Coat-of-arms with a lion rampage!' Whew! Good-night!"



Excerpts from a Glossary

Filched from a censor's desk by Earl Kauffman

ACTION: Playful proteids in a glass of milk.
CLIMAX: Matilda retrieving ball of baby blue yarn from family cat.
CONFLICT: Clash between two knitting needles.
CONTINUITY: Pollyanna and Elsie Dinsmore out walking with the Bobbsy Twins.
CRISIS: A broken doily hoop.
PHOTOPLAYWRIGHT: Direct descendant of Beelzebub.
PLOT: Two spoons in a bowl of mush.
SCENARIO: Criminal propaganda.
SCENARIO EDITOR: Fagin, Jesse James and Gyp The Blood reincarnate.
STUDIO: Dante's Seventh Circle.
STRUGGLE: Infant trying to find budding tooth with thumb.
SUSPENSE: Waiting for cup of tea to cool.
THRILL: See Conflict; Climax; also Struggle.



WHEN the scenario editor offers you twice as much for your photoplay as you were about to ask, be sure to tell him you expected more. He will realize that you're emulating Munchausen and will deeply respect your powers of imagination.

1922 Will Reward Screen Writers

By Benjamin B. Hampton

"1922 Will Reward Writers."

That is the way I have taken the liberty of paraphrasing the famous slogan used by the Chicago Tribune during the recent period of business depression.

"1921 Will Reward Fighters" was the way it was originally conceived, and just as sure as that prophecy has come true, I feel sure that the prophecy made in my paraphrase of it will become a reality.

By writers I naturally mean those who are preparing original stories for the screen, and I sincerely believe with the coming fall and winter, when the inevitable re-adjustments have been made that had to come, and when the kinks in the motion picture industry have been ironed out by the steam roller of common sense, photoplay dramatists will find — after the storm — pots of silver and currency at least, if not pots of gold, at the end of the rainbow that is sure to shine.

The screen needs original stories as never before.

The classics have been picked over carefully and the best of them made into photoplays. The better known successes of the spoken drama have been drafted into service as film material. The stock of current novels of the present day is practically exhausted, and the authors of 1921 do not seem to be surfeiting the literary market with novels that are altogether ideal for practical metamorphosis into photoplay form.



BENJAMIN B. HAMPTON'S articles in The Pictorial Review caused the whole photoplay-going world to gasp. After he had contributed the article to The Bookman that caused wide comment among the literati, we thought it about time to ask Mr. Hampton for a message to photodramatists.

He was one of the first motion picture producers to feature the author above director and star.

Many will recall him as the founder and editor of Hampton's Magazine—and for his game stand for a principle in a never-to-be forgotten episode which consummated in the closing of the magazine's career.

He has as dauntlessly stood by his convictions since entering picturedom—being one of the first to insist on "clean" pictures, while at the same time unreservedly combating censorship.

The beginner in scenario writing has a golden opportunity to compete with the working novelist and the experienced playwright. Photoplay writing is a new art, and has to be learned by the maker of books and by the creator of dramas just the same as by the ambitious student. True, from practice of plot construction, of building running narrative, and of character analysis and development the professional writer has somewhat of an edge on the beginner, but the beginner may often have the advantage of a more fertile imagination, of a freshness of viewpoint, of a more stimulative ambition, and the lack of precedents from which to break away. The novelist has been schooled along certain lines and there are many things he must forget when he starts to write for the silver sheet. The playwright has been restricted by well-defined conventions, and has bowed inevitably to certain pragmatisms. He has things to un-learn in order to

become a successful creator of film dramas.

Literary style means nothing to a screen writer, a polysyllabic vocabulary is more often a handicap than a help, and subtly hidden meanings and flights of philosophy will doom many an otherwise acceptable script. The average producer is not a college professor finding delights in clever phrases, classical references and highly involved though cleverly worked out similes, metaphors and metonomies. Producers are not buying literary material. They are purchasing what might be termed architects' blue prints, from which they can construct a successful screen production.

Very few producers study carefully the literary material from which they propose to make pictures. The "producer" is the manufacturer of photoplays, and almost invariably his training has been in commercial lines that had nothing to do with literature. These manufacturers buy the brains that deal with the problems of literature, art and drama that confront the maker of screen plays.

True, there is coming into existence a species of producer that functions more along the line of a magazine editor. This new type of producer works closely with his authors, scenario writers, painters, architects, decorators, directors and players. His personality dominates every foot of his pictures. This class is overwhelmingly in the minority. Of a thousand or more screen productions a year, perhaps three dozen come from this class of producer.

Therefore, it is not worth while in this article to emphasize his existence; it is better for us to use the space in considering the practical workaday world composed of the business men who buy stories from which to manufacture pictures.

The average producer is hard pressed for time. He has a thousand and one details pulling at his coat sleeve every minute, each detail clamoring that what it stands for is the most important item of the day. When a story is submitted to him, he wants just enough words so that he can hurriedly visualize something of what the finished photoplay will be like. Doubtless on the walls of his office hangs a simply framed motto, "Please Be Brief," and the writer of photoplays should keep a mental picture of that phrase constantly as he writes the synopsis that is to be the entering wedge. It is the writer who hooverizes words and yet gets over his punch in skeleton form whose brain child is most likely to receive serious consideration.

While it is advisable for the embryo writer to see all the worth while stage plays possible, it is more important that a goodly portion of the writer's spare time is passed in reading novels, both of the hour and of the ages. Plot construction, character development, the building of a climax, and a hundred and one other little essentials of story telling can only be acquired by reading from the works of the more skillful raconteurs. As the photoplay caters to the masses, it is well to stick rather carefully in your modern reading to the best sellers. The best sellers do not always represent the highest type of literature, and are often mercilessly impaled by the book critics, but they must have some elemental human appeal in them to sell edition after edition.

Producers are in the motion picture business primarily to make money, and the success of a production is judged by its returns at the theater box office, which is evidence of the size of the bullseye it has scored with the public at large, rather than by what a few critics have said about it.

As I said in my recent article in The Bookman, photoplay making is more closely related to novel building than to play building. The novelist's sense of characters, his description of locations and sets, his feel for the movement, all these elements, and others, supply the photodramatist with the materials needed for a closely-knit, convincing screen play.

The stage dramatist's art is limited by the brief period in which he may present his thoughts to his audience. Two and a half hours is a very short time in which to work out plot, characterization, heart throbs, comedy. Whenever I see a good play I feel like giving three rousing cheers for the craftsman who put over his idea under such definite limitations. But no matter how great our admiration for the playwright, we are compelled to admit that when his material is offered for the screen the photodramatist must add to it vastly or a thin picture is the result.

An illustration of this may be found in one of last year's highly successful pictures, "Male and Female," Cecil DeMille's production, founded on Sir James M. Barrie's "The Admirable Crichton." Literary folks scream with pain at Mr. De Mille's "improvements" on a Barrie masterpiece, but Mr. DeMille proved himself a good craftsman and a good showman by handling the Barrie material as he did.

"The Admirable Crichton" might have made a fairly acceptable three-reel picture;

certainly it would have been very thin at five reels. As a three-reeler it would not have found a market, this length of picture being impossible under present methods of exhibition. As a five-reeler it would have been a doubtful production. Mr. DeMille's knowledge of "market conditions" compelled him to make a six-reel picture. His screen craftsmanship was used in introducing a retrospect in which he skilfully played on the general belief in reincarnation and at the same time produced an episode of the splendiferous type so beloved by movie audiences.

I think I am safe in the statement that every successful photoplay made from a stage play bears evidence of skilful rebuilding after it reached the studio.

My own opinion—and I offer it merely as an individual opinion—is that the screen offers a promising field for the newspaper reporter and editorial writer, provided the latter has had reportorial experience before he became an editor.

Perhaps I ought to qualify this by saying that the telephone reporter of our great metropolitan dailies is not the man I have in mind. I mean the reporter who hustles around among all classes of folks and sees life at first hand. If he has the journalistic instinct he is gathering impressions of character, putting away pieces of incidents and other material that ought to be of constant value to him in writing screen plays.

Unquestionably the movies are moving upward. Three years ago trashy, hack-written photoplays were the rule. Today they are the exception. The public shows signs of discrimination. Better writing, better acting, better direction, better sets and properties, better titles—improvement in every department of production has been so notable in two years that one may predict with safety that the next two years will see the photoplay far along on its journey toward artistic perfection.

Authors have aided wonderfully in this upward movement. Rex Beach, the pioneer, has exercised an immeasurable influence. Other well-known American authors, notably Stewart Edward White, Zane Grey, Rupert Hughes, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Basil King, Gouverneur Morris, Emerson Hough and Harry Leon Wilson are aiding in establishing higher standards in picture production. Bayard Veiller, Thompson Buchanan and other dramatists are working effectively in creating technique for a new art. The would-be writer of originals has been set a hard pace by these well-known authors, but I have seen many a play written by a screen writer that excelled a film made from the story by a prominent author.

So far we have seen the screen borrowing from the stage and the library rather largely for its material. Within a few years I believe it will be no uncommon thing to see the footlights and the bookshelves begging on the doorstep of the films.

At present the usual process is for the author to write a novel, publish it serially in a magazine; then it comes out in book form, and perhaps later some enterprising playwright dramatizes it. Soon it looks like good screen material to a producer, and he purchases the screen rights from the author of the stage play.

It will not surprise me at all to see the art of photoplay writing so highly developed that dramatists will build stage plays from the screen productions, and that the novelization from the stage play may come last. Perhaps in many instances novels will be built up from photoplays without journeying by way of the footlights.

The screen author is receiving more and more credit every day. The times have passed when the writer of the original story was considered a nonentity, and the professional scenarist at the studio, the director, or the star took his work, demolished it a little, and then put themselves on the screen as the creators of the script. This used to be a common practice in the early days; the authors being so glad to get a check averaging $250 for a five or six reel feature that they said nothing.

Everyone knows how the amounts paid for stories have jumped skyward, and I believe story costs are one of the items in picture production that will stand for little trimming. The law of supply and demand will keep prices on this necessity up. In the past it has been no uncommon thing for a $200,000 production to be built from a $750 story, but these days seem to be over.

The day is already at hand when authors who write direct for the screen are beginning to receive royalties in place of flat sums. This has been the practice on the stage for many years, but is just beginning to be introduced on the screen. Under the royalty system, the author of a successful photoplay will receive many times the amount the producer would be willing to allow as a flat payment.

The day of the co-operative picture is at hand. Several producers I know of are

allowing the writers of the photoplay a substantial interest in the production for furnishing the basic story material. Easy street is just a short distance away when a writer participates in the profits of one or more money-making film features.

These are only a few of the reasons why I say, "1922 Will Reward Writers," but when I say "1922" I do not mean to limit my prophecy to this year. I am sure I can safely assert that it will hold good for 1923, 1924, and so on as long as the film industry endures, which is the same as saying "ad infinitum."



To the Rescue

By Jane Horton

At the Atlantic City convention of the Moving Picture Theatre Owners' Association, there was a lot of talk from some sources about adopting ways and means of stemming the decline in cinema theatre attendance. The head of the motion picture industry of Sweden, a man undoubtedly of high aesthetic and artistic sensitiveness, blamed the affirmed slump on "the happy ending," saying that for the life of him he couldn't see how interest could be kept up when our public knew that, despite whatever suspenseful elements introduced, every photoplay was bound to end with the inevitable clinch-up.

Much ado about nothing. Of all the frail figments of imagination, the supposed movie slump takes the cake. Actually, there has never been a slump, a fact which will disturb and dismay the chronic crepe hangers, but alas for the gloom diffusers, here are the facts, issued by that reliable old gentleman, Uncle Sam:

Taking the ten per cent admission tax as a basis, the total admissions paid from June 1, 1919, to May 31, 1920, in the cinema theatres of the United States, amounted to $74,849,003; whereas the total admissions paid in from June 1, 1920, to May 31, 1921, amounted to $90,628,713—a gain of $15,779,710.

Nor can it be said that the slump came in 1921, for there was a gain of between half a million and a million dollars per month for every month from January to May inclusive over the same month in 1920.

The tax on films showed a gain for every month over the same month in the preceding year. The motion picture industry is considered about the healthiest "child" in the financial world; this is borne out by the fact that it is fifth in importance among special tariffs, being exceeded only by taxes on freight shipments, personal transportation, automobiles and corporation stocks.

To be true, there were a number of financial blow-ups in the production end of the film industry, mostly however, among wildcatters and inexperienced people, the established organizations being little affected. Many people, actuated by a profound conceit, endeavored to "independently" buck a game they were almost totally unfamiliar with; these people ran riot on production costs, and today are unable to secure financial backing.

However, there is an acute film shortage at this moment. There is a far greater demand for good screen stories than there is a supply. While there are many films on the shelves, they are for the most part unsalable and unseeable—poorly, cheaply, inartistically produced photoplays that the makers are too wise to foist upon a public that has become fastidious.

An indication of true conditions in the film market is the anxiety of producers complete productions in double-quick time, for instant release! One feature photoplay, shipped east three weeks ago, is already being exhibited in eastern cities. Under normal circumstances, a print is held several months before being released.

The movie magnate from Sweden was evidently mistaken as to the financial detriment of the happy ending. The average American, and our photoplays are levelled at him and for him, wishes to see his existence on the planet justified by a pleasant denoument. It may be that in time our art consciousness will expand, and that we will stand for the "apparent" facts of life, but for the nonce Sophocles will remain in the discard. Evidently there will continue to be a need for thousands of screen stories this year and next—written in terms of happiness, kindness, humanness.

This Side of Nirvana

By Ted LeBerthon

Hope

Some of the critics have objected to the lack of tragedy on the screen, and have shaken their heads sadly at the over indulgence in sunshine. Allusions have been made to Sophocles chuckling in his tomb over the unnaturalness of the happy ending, and there has been speculation in "cultured" circles as to what Socrates would have done had he been forced to sit through "Pollyanna." One critic ventured the belief that Socrates would have gulped the fatal hemlock in the interest of Art, that future screen writers might derive inspiration from his unhappy ending.

If it is not Art to saturate with the beauty of hope, then let us coin a new word for the photoplay, as it is impossible for the spirit of hopelessness to long endure under the cloudless, sunny skies of Southern California, where a majority of motion pictures are created. A people are one with their soil, with their trees and grasses, wind, rain and sunshine. The warmth in our veins and in the sunshine are one.

We do not and cannot deny sorrow immediate and remote, just around the corner or hastening from afar, but can commend as infinitely valuable the photoplay which fades out on a rainbow or tells a story of hope that does not set with the sun, and rises before the stars.

Let us laugh at the grave, erudite critics so sadly entangled in the dead leaves of thought, the mouldy skeleton foliage, the bewildering dust blown from the past to the present. Let them quote their endless repetitions of names, and scorn the motion picture because its spirit is not that of corrosive gloom.

Leave the dead to the dead, and feel thankful that after a day of toil and perhaps worriment, we may see hopeful faces pass before us on a screen—in stories that tell us there shall be as good a then as now, stories that send us home smiling to a sleep of pleasant dreams.

Best Story Market

In the history of motion pictures, there has never been so great a demand for stories as there is right now. Furthermore, the prices for stories are keeping up, though other production costs are being cut. There is a distinct reason for this healthy story market.

The failure, in most cases, of the "director special"—the public not being intrigued by the directors' names—and the concurrent lack of response to the eminent authors' names, has caused a change in policy at most of the representative studios.

To begin with, the all-star "director" specials cost too much money to make, as a general rule; and in a majority of instances, the eminent author was found to not only lack box office drawing power but the ability to write in terms of pictures.

The necessity for cheaper production and at the same time more certain drawing power has caused a general reversion to the "star" system. Program pictures will hereafter cost from $20,000 to $75,000 to produce, and will be sold in "star" series to the exhibitors.

As it is now absolutely conceded that no star can be successful with poor stories, the best possible material will be carefully and ceaselessly sought after—and stories will not be built around the star. The star will have to fit the story. The story will be the thing, just as with the all-star cast productions; the star's name is necessary to the box-office success, but the star—himself or herself—will not be idiotically close-upped and favored to the point of spoiling the artistic merit of the photoplay. The "star" now knows that only good stories intelligently produced will win the race for fame and popularity.

Famous Players-Lasky has started the ball rolling by creating several new stars. The competition for stories is and is going to be tremendous.

A Goal

In all walks of modern life, a certain word seems hovering near—the word that has blown across the midwest prairies in stalwart gusts; and has entered into the very fibre of men and institutions from Manhattan Island to the Golden Gate, and from the Gulf to the Great Lakes. That word is co-operation.

The Authors' League of America stands for a Brotherhood of Intellect. It purposes to foster the art of letters, to reach out for the highest ideals of intellectual beauty. Its aim is to bring recognition to new and old writers according to their talents, to make the story the thing! This, as against the intensive commercial exploitation of great names.

There are three guilds of The Authors' League: The Dramatists', The Free Lance Artists' and The Screen Writers'.

The Screen Writers' Guild is going to do all in its power to encourage the writing of original photoplays by the newer and coming generations of writers, that the art of screen writing may become individualized. Much of this encouragement will come from the fact that the Screen Writers' Guild will act as a body to obtain both intrinsic and extrinsic recognition for its members.

To become a member of the guild, it will be necessary to be the author of one photoplay or continuity, which is actually accepted, produced and "screened." Then one may be proposed for membership by someone already a member, and admitted after the application has been passed upon by the membership committee.

Associate members will be admitted from the ranks of other arts, but only on the grounds of artistic or intellectual prowess. No amount of money can ever purchase a guild membership. A man may be an excellent fellow, a success in a business way, but be utterly ineligible.

Great names will count for nothing in the eyes of the guild, unless those who bear them create works of photoplay art. A writer hitherto unheard of who renders a photoplay of high artistic merit will find the guild behind him to the last man, that he may receive as much recognition and remuneration as one whose name has been associated with a dozen masterpieces.

What higher goal for the beginner or student of today than a membership in the Screen Writers' Guild? For when that goal is attained, one becomes a recognized creative artist, whose future work will obtain a respectful reading at any studio in Filmdom. Acceptances will bring sums of money in keeping with the proportionate value of the story to the motion picture production in toto.

Every possible co-operation will be extended potential talent and genius. Screen credit will be secured for all members.

The Screen Writers' Club in Hollywood, which is also the western headquarters for the Authors' League, is without doubt—even in its present youth—the intellectual center of western America. For photodramatists, it is the end of an uphill trail, a vantage point from which to assail the mountain peaks of art.

Finding a Theme

Gouverneur Morris' story, "The Wild Goose," recently filmed by Cosmopolitan, was inspired by a conversation the author overheard between two duck hunters. They were discussing an old adage among ornithologists that a wild goose never deserts its mate. Presto! and the legend was transplanted into a modern human environment, with a young married couple as the goose and gander. We hope Mr. Morris never eaves-drops on a pair of rabbit hunters.

The Bizarre—Ordinarily, we would never recommend the average writer, and we will never recommend the young, inexperienced writer, to attempt the fantastic, the bizarre, the grotesque. However, it stands to reason that the outstanding popularity of such imported films as "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" and "The Golem" is the result of the surfeiting of the American public with hundreds of mediocre, conventional photoplays. The American is ever seeking change, something new and novel; therefore, it seems quite timely for some artistic photodramatist whose talents approximate those of Edgar Allen Poe to contrive some weird drama that will waken those monstrous figures which crouch in the by-paths and lonely corners of consciousness—back in the tenebrous steppes of the mental hinterland. It is a fallacy to suppose that the public will not respond to stories of invisible terror or even physical horror. The box-office successes of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and "Behind the Door" are striking examples. Every work of photodramatic art can stand on its artistic merit, without the need of a moral or purpose. Whether its drama is induced through physical action, as in "Behind the Door," or through horrible mental and emotional reactions, as in "The Avenging Conscience"—Griffith's screen version combining Poe's "Annabel Lee" and "The Tell Tale Heart"—it is always upon drama that the success of a piece hinges. It would be interesting to note the efforts of screen writers to tell in pictorial terms stories that might have been created by an Ambrose Bierce, a Beaudelaire, a Poe!

Wisdom for Writers

An Associated Producers' Symposium
Introduction by George Landy

THE photodramatist has one of the most restricted markets of all the fields of human endeavor; there are just so many scenario editors, directors and producers. Your story must be sold to one of these people or—outside of the creative joy—it might better not have been written. Even the pure creative joy of the photoplay author cannot be deemed to be satisfactorily appeased or gratified, unless his—or her—scenario takes on form through translation to the silver sheet. For it is the essence of the stage play or the scenario that it must be enacted and projected—in the one case vocally, in the other mechanically—to have lived, to have achieved its purpose in being.

It was with this thought that I decided to put the question that is the basis of this symposium to a particular group of director-producers, each of whom has attained considerable success from both the popular as well as the purely artistic standpoint; these men are banded together in an organization known as Associated Producers, which consists of Thomas H. Ince, Mack Sennett, Maurice Tourneur, Allan Dwan, J. Parker Read, Jr., and releases pictures made by Frothingham. Surely the unedited expression of opinion from this group would give something concretely suggestive to the readers of the Photodramatist. This group represents every school of direction and every policy of production; its constituent members are so well known by their works and their attainments that it is superfluous to do more than merely proffer for your consideration the exact replies sent in by them.

EXPERIENCE

By Thomas H. Ince

THE one main essential for a good motion picture scenario is, briefly, that the author of the scenario have a real understanding of life. A good scenario is one that is interesting; to win interest you must beget sympathy, and sympathy is the result of understanding. This is, in turn, the child of authority, i. e., you must be able to speak with authoritative knowledge—to win understanding, sympathy and interest. It is a logical chain of the simplest kind and purely syllogistic in its construction.

To know life, to understand it—it is not necessary that the author shall have lived in every clime and under every conceivable condition. Few of us have the means or the opportunity to emulate the owner of Aladdin's magic carpet, which transported him over the whole world at will. After all, human beings are pretty much the same; no matter what their color, costume, creed or religion—these are only surface adaptations of the fundamental qualities that go to make up human nature. Study people, when and as you find them—make allowances for individual and group distinctions of minor importance—and you will have the basis for numberless good scenarios.

Every photoplay deals with people—when you know people, and have practiced and studied sufficiently so that you can put that knowledge into scenario form, then you will succeed. And every producer of motion pictures will be a-gunning for your scenarios.

PROPORTIONATE INGREDIENTS

By Mack Sennett

I HATE to restore to memory that which has long gone past, but I am forced to it. A good picture is like a perfect cocktail. There is no ingredient that ought to predominate, at least in a comedy. Everything put in must be weighed accurately against everything else, so that the net result is a delicious blend made up in equal effectiveness of all the elements, none of which overwhelms the others.

If you ask me to what ingredient belongs the honor of identifying the mixture, I answer that there used to be whiskey cocktails, gin cocktails, vermouth cocktails, and so on. Just so, there are various types of comedies—comedy dramas, melodramas, romantic melodramas, farce comedies, hilarious, pie-throwing comedies, and so on. Their names describe their natures and indicate what ought to be the prevailing element in their mixture; but when the thing

is done, there ought to be no predominating quality—just a blend that is easy to take, stimulating in its effect and, unlike the cocktail of old, without any depressing after results; only pleasurable memories.

But if, in the mixing, there should be a slip of the hand and a little too much of one ingredient dashed into the mixture, I should say that it ought to be wholesome humor that appeals to all and is clean to the taste.

BEAUTY

By Maurice Tourneur

IN ORDER that I shall not burden you with repetition, I shall avoid listing several other essentials for a good scenario, since they will be covered by my confreres in this symposium. I shall focus my own particular spotlight, so to speak, on the matter of beauty in the scenario.

Beauty is the fundamental in life — the seeming difference in men's attitudes is only a difference of interpretation of what is beautiful; but there are, at the same time, certain forms of beauty whose pleasing power is practically universal.

In writing your scenario, therefore, I would urge you most strongly to see that it possesses beauty. We have largely gotten away from the idea that a surface, physical beauty was the chief requisite for screen stardom, but it's mighty nice for the eyes to see a pretty girl on the screen. So put her—or a number of "hers"—in your story. You'll find that the present-day film actress can act, even if she is good looking. When you can, have your locations suggest beautiful scenes; your interiors, beautiful sets. This does not mean to set a scene in a factory worker's home in what looks like a Fifth Avenue mansion drawing room; there is a real beauty in the simple, often more convincing than in the gorgeous. And then there are the numerous photographic effects, with which you should be familiar if you are to be a successful scenario writer, that are beautiful from the strictly artistic standpoint.

Above all, however, is the beauty of the soul, the inner beauty that radiates through the lives and doings of the real heroes and heroines of the world. Get that into your scenario—and the world will beat a path to your door.

CLIMAX

By Allan Dwan

IN a word—and it can be so expressed—the chief essential for a good scenario is a climax. Here and there in the film world is a photoplay without a climax, but then its interest and resulting success is not a typical instance, and is due either to some freak characterization, some stunt in direction or photography, or some other peculiarly timely attribute. Almost invariably, you will find that the successful picture has a scenario wherein the climax has been carefully worked out and built up. Sometimes it is the result of a logical plot development, sometimes it is the twist which made O. Henry our most beloved short story writer—but always it is there. And when you have reached your climax, do not fear to cut your story short. Whatever more you add is anticlimax — worse than useless, because it dulls the edge of appreciation.

The climax of a story is like the dessert of a dinner; the scenario and the menu are alike in that they must have variety, be appetizing, possess body—and have a climax. It may be light and frothy, it may be rich—but it must be there, or you have flivvered on a great opportunity. For the screen is the greatest opportunity ever given to mankind to accomplish the entertainment of our fellow man, and legitimate entertainment is the one universal requirement for happiness.

The consummate entertainment must have climax, whatever its form or nature; see to it that your photodrama possesses that essential and you will have a good scenario.

HEART INTEREST

By J. Parker Read, Jr.

THE primary function of the motion picture being to entertain, it stands to reason that the plot based upon a theme in common with the problems of the greatest number will be proportionately successful. Inasmuch as the motion picture reaches millions of all classes, its principal ingredient must necessarily be heart interest. However, since constant repetition weakens even the most tenacious elements of drama, it devolves upon the aspirant for success as a screen writer to employ ingenious methods in creating a keen sense of suspense in working out his story.

The public will always respond to thrills, and are always romance-hungry. It therefore becomes imperative that the writer conceive photoplays in which heart interest dominates in a conflict of forces that always threaten but never quite succeed in destroying the representatives of love and goodness.

ART AND HONESTY

By J. L. Frothingham

THE one main essential for a good scenario is that it be honest. This sounds like either a useless statement—for every one of us who is sincere in his work tries to be honest with himself—or else, as if it were only an attempt at sensationalism.

The fact remains, however, that many of us are not honest about our work in the scenario line; I do not refer to plagiarism or any other dishonesty such as is apparent to even the most casual outsider. I mean this: that the good scenario is written with sincere conviction as to its value and in the belief that it fills a definite need in the screen world. And in that case, it follows almost axiomatically, that it be an all-star scenario; or, if you prefer another manner of statement, a no-star scenario.

Fortunately for the honest scenario writer—and also for the general public which pays its admisions to see the fruits of our efforts—we have gone beyond the day of the picture whose sole excuse for existence was that it exploited the mannerisms or beauty of a particular star. We are now getting screen stories which are stories and whose translation into film form is due to their entertainment value. Write your story honestly; avoid stressing any role simply because that is the part which will probably be entrusted to the highest salaried actor in the group of performers who will create your scenario; let the emphasis fall where it may, naturally, honestly, and through the combination of events and circumstances that go to make up your plot.

Do this—refuse to let yourself be tempted away from the straight and narrow path—and you will find that you have written a good scenario, a photodrama that pictures life as it is. And nothing is more interesting than that!



Monocles

The protagonists of movie censorship and all other reformers for that matter, would do well to consider the sound philosophy humorously delivered by Alfred Kreymborg in his poem, "Monocles," which we are reprinting from a recent number of *The Dial.* Of course, it's a moot question as to whether Dr. Crafts and his cronies would even understand Al. Here's the poem:

"Reducing the universe
to one round view,
and terming it religion,
is truly beyond my capacity:
compressing one's view,
like a hoop,
for other folk to be whipped through—
squeezing the rim so tight
that not even a gnat
could manage the hole—
requires more strength
than I have the pincers for:
beholding what one is pleased
to call God,
and greeting Him exclusively
through the monocle
of one's own righteousness—
that eye
suffers astigmatism,
I prefer to try the other."



Profitable Photoplay Writing

By Marshall Neilan

THE most successful motion picture writers of today are the men and women who are most sensitive to the desires of the public.

The most unsuccessful writers are those who go blindly ahead placing their own ideals foremost regardless of public taste.

The fact that a writer is ten years ahead of the public is no more excuse for a failure than is the fact that he is ten years behind the times.

Those who scoff at the public's taste and attempt to force down the throats of the persons who seek entertainment something which they—the authors—believe the public *should* like cannot expect success.

No person or group of persons can dictate what the public shall have in the way of motion picture entertainment. Yet we find examples of just this attitude every day.

With this point established that his greatest problem is to give the public what it wants, the producer is confronted with the situation of how and where he is to get this material.

The wild rush for famous books and plays has been halted at last. The fact that a story has been popular as a play or book is no longer held as a criterion that it will succeed as a picture.

The writing end of the motion picture business is finally coming into its own. Producers have learned that it is better to pay well for a story especially written for the screen than to pay fabulous amounts for titles of plots that have won favor as books or plays.

There are many ways of telling a story on the screen. The writer and director who are in harmony with the public and can evolve a photoplay in the way it likes best can hardly go wrong.

It is foolish to soar to lofty heights that are beyond the average theatre-goer, just because the producer is anxious to register how "artistic" he can be. Art must be commercial or it will not pay. The business of starving to death for art's sake wins no praise, nor does it benefit the public you are trying to serve.

The average American man and woman is not digging among Egyptian ruins nor studying Greek. He or she is too busy earning a living to go into the matter of "higher arts." Motion picture stories must be told in the language the average intelligent citizen can understand. To go beyond this standard is just as fatal as to go below it.

Progress in motion picture entertainment has not been made in leaps and bounds. The public has learned the present-day screen language just as the pupil learns arithmetic. The evolution of the film play of ten years ago to the present motion picture production has been gradual. The public has progressed in its understanding of the film in time with the persons who are responsible for the screen entertainment, and who have advanced step by step.

There is no doubt but that the intelligence of the average man or woman can be enhanced through the medium of the screen. This, however, must be accomplished gradually. In other words, I do not contend that the public should not be given something better than what it has been accustomed to, but I do feel that the screen writers who would bring the average person up to what they—the writers—consider "real art," must do this gradually, stopping the minute they realize they are shooting over the heads of their audiences.

The minute a writer or director feels that his public is not accompanying him on the road to his ideals, he must realize that he is not giving them what they want. In other words, he had better work along the road where the public crowds itself rather than the unfrequented road, no matter how beautiful this lonely road may appear to him.



The Dream Factory

By G. Harrison Wiley

A LONG time ago, when I was a small kiddie in school, I learned a rather pretty little song, wherein a child of the Orient expressed his wonder at our strange customs:

"If I could but visit the land
That lies away over the sea,
Perhaps I might very well understand
Some things that seem strange to me."

So I know, many students of the photo-drama, way off in Kalamazoo or Keokuk, feel that if they might visit the land where photoplays are made, some of the mystery that surrounds the craft would be torn away. Without doubt, a year spent in the studios would lessen the difficulties that beset the path of every ambitious writer.

However, Frederick Palmer, in his text books and his many splendid lectures has smoothed many of the ruts and stones from this path which is at best long and toilsome. With this in mind, I sometimes liken him to the genii of the lamp in Aladdin's story, working incessantly and efficiently.

And the studio, around which so great a skein of glamour has been spun, is after all only a great Dream Factory, in which your dreams and others' are woven into a tiny ribbon that is carried half way around the world to be dreams for the tired little shop girl next door and the rich old man in the mansion who has lost all his own. There is Romance and glamour herein to be sure, but the same romance of *DOING* you will find in your work-a-day world if you seek it.

In this vast Dream Factory, a place of hustling, bustling activity, a phase of the making of dreams of which the gossip-loving press agent rarely chatters and yet which seems to me full of glamour and interest, is the spinning of backgrounds on which the gossamer thread of fancy is embroidered.

Making the background of a dream is the task and the delight of the studio Art Department. Perhaps if you have written a story of Afghanistan, you have realized, more or less vaguely, that a street or building in or upon which your action will be played, must be built at the studio; which, if a replica, must be so exact that a native will be fooled; or if imagined and created will be so accurately typical that it *might* exist, before the camera man can begin turning his crank.

At the Famous Players-Lasky Studio in Hollywood, Mr. Max E. Parker, a well known architect and designer, is the Art Director, and has a staff of four skilled architects and an accomplished artist.

Briefly, their work falls into two general classifications, the creation or design of settings in period or character style, which while created to suit the action of the photoplay are typical of the locale, and the duplication or reproduction of certain existing structures called for in the story.

In some countries, such as Italy, France and England, the style in Architecture, Decoration and the kindred arts has varied greatly during many distinct periods of the countries' history, and these variations in design are called the period styles. In other

ENTER LASKY'S!

See how your screen story backgrounds and atmosphere are materialized in the cities, streets, and houses designed by architects, approved by the Research Department, then built by accomplished artists and skilled artisans. G. Harrison Wiley, in the Art Department of the Famous Players-Lasky Hollywood Studio, "shows you through" in this article.

countries such as China and Japan, there has been but slight variation throughout their entire history, yet the elements of design and construction are quite distinctive from those of any other locale and are classed as character styles.

Our domestic architecture is a composite of borrowed periods and character. The Colonial buildings of New Hampshire, for instance, differ widely from those of Virginia and the south, though they possess many elements in common of their period.

So the locale of a story may be entirely identified by the character of the settings; the time or period by the style or design. So, too, in the case of a house, the position in life of its occupant, his character, moods and peculiarities.

Therefore, this staff of Architects must be exceptionally versatile, and able to identify by settings any corner of the globe and any period of history. In addition to this, they must be versed in every angle of production, understanding camera technique, lighting and the craft of the artisans who will execute their designs. A final requisite, perhaps one of the most important, is the capability for *speed*. For in a motion picture studio every unit must work with machine-like precision and no part can fail in its functioning without delaying the entire production and entailing a great monetary loss. In each picture there are from five to twenty-five settings; and from four to nine pictures are in production constantly. This means that where the average architect is able to spend weeks in the evolution of a design, the work of the Art Department is limited to a few hours or days, and construction must follow quite as rapidly.

After your brain child has been accepted by the studio for production and the continuity written, the work of the Art Department begins. A copy of the continuity for every story is furnished the Art Director and he and his staff study carefully the requirements of every scene.

If, as I have heretofore suggested, your story has for its locale Afghanistan, in scene No. 215, the action may call for a village street. The hero, pursued by the villain, rides into the scene on a racing camel, and lifting his lady from a balcony on which she is waiting, rides out through a gate at the end of the street.

How high is a camel? And where will that balcony be placed so that the action may be carried out? In conference with the Director, the Art Director learns exactly how the former has visualized the scene and approximately where he wishes the major action in relation to the camera; where he desires entrances and exits and the nature and massing of the subordinate or atmospheric action planned, such as mob movements, merchandising and trading.

All such questions must be clearly understood before work can commence on the set and the Director be assured that it will be ready for him at a specified time. The Art Director, once the requirements of the set have been established, instructs members of his staff as to these requirements, the approximate size and the placing of such buildings as will be used, their use, the angle at which the camera will view the set and the distance at which it will be placed from the foreground in the long shots.

The Architect has probably never been in Afghanistan, and so consults the Research Department, from which department he secures every available photograph or written description of the country. He may find a picture in which there is shown a balcony that may be adapted to the action of the set, if not, such a balcony must be designed, as well as the building upon which it is placed.

He studies the methods of construction, the materials used, the motifs of architectural design and detail until he is thoroughly familiar with Afghanistan and the Afghanistanese way of doing things. He may read descriptions of street life in the country, of the bazaars or stalls that line these streets, if such is the case.

He then begins the scale and detail drawings, plan and elevations of the buildings that form the street, using, or simulating where it is not possible to use, the same materials used in native construction. He duplicates native ornament and detail in full sized drawings. These drawings are blueprinted and a copy furnished to each of the departments that will co-operate in the construction, exactly as the Architect who designs your house will make drawings and supply copies to each of the contractors involved.

A few years ago, the methods used in building sets were largely borrowed from the stage, walls being crudely constructed of canvas and depending upon the scene painters' ability at faking for any semblance of substance and reality, often windows and doors and even furniture being merely painted in. Today the entire process has advanced in keeping with the other phases

of the motion picture art, and settings are built substantially and of genuine materials, designed not only to be correct and to appear as a reality but to enhance the artistry of story and acting with beauty in line, mass and balance. I am confident that the motion picture setting has the possibility of being and is, a potent factor in the education of a great mass of people, bringing to them painlessly and effectively a new sense of beauty in Architecture and Decoration, that will react as a stimulus toward civic improvement and the bettering of their surroundings at home and elsewhere.

A completely equipped mill and carpenter shop constructs all woodwork and erects a frame; if there are plastered walls they are executed by artisans in that line. If there is work supposedly in stone, such as columns with their bases and capitals, friezes and cornices or carved panel work, skilled sculptors execute these in clay according to drawings, imitating exactly even the texture of the stone that would be used. A mould is made from the model, and the pieces are cast in plaster. If there is carved wood used in the construction an experienced wood carver executes this.

The painters, when the carpenters and others have the set erected, come in with their colors and apply the finish; as well as, when it is called for, supplying the stains and weathering of Time and other agents. It must be remembered the while the sets are painted and decorated in color, on the screen these appear only as some tone of gray. In painting for the camera therefore, the actinic or photographic value of color must be considered in order to secure the proper contrast of light and dark surfaces, inasmuch as a yellow or orange photographs quite dark, while a blue which is to the eye much darker will photograph very light.

After the painters the set is ready for the decorators or set dressers, and in the case of exteriors, the gardener. The "set dressers" furnish the set in character, supplying from the immense property warehouse or from outside sources the hangings, utensils, wares and trappings or furniture required.

Here as well care must be exercised to effect accuracy, lest in the case of your Afghanistanese street, a man who has been there shall honor the producer or the press with a scathing denunciation, informing the universe that one of the extra mob in the street scene carried a shillaleh, unknown in Afghanistan.

Over this entire preparation the Art Director in most studios does, and should, supervise, until the set is ready to turn over to the Director. He must be able to foresee any difficulty in securing the desired action, or any difficulty in the photography as well as any error or inconsistency in design and decoration and correct the same before it has been registered in the camera.

Practically the same procedure as described for an Afghanistanese street, is followed in the design and construction of every setting, exterior and interior, called for in the continuity of a picture. Of course, in the use of domestic Architecture, not quite so much research is necessary; and yet the Art Department subscribes to all of the best Architectural periodicals, keeping in close touch with the work of the foremost American architects and the most modern expressions of beauty in design.

Where it is necessary to reproduce an existing structure, the Architect works from photographs in much the same manner, his first problem being the establishing of a scale whereby he can measure accurately the size of every member used in the construction of the original. The effect of perspective in photographs complicates this problem greatly. Recently at the Lasky studio the lobby of the St. Francis hotel at San Francisco and a fountain in the Luxembourg Gardens of Paris have been reproduced.

In a modern and domestic story, it is not always necessary to build every exterior; as the exteriors of apartment houses, residences, etc., which are suitable, may often be found in the vicinity of the studio, and the right to photograph these secured from the owner.

Where an exterior is photographed "on location" the interior may be built at the studio, making it necessary not only to correspond in physical features such as door and window openings but to tie up in character or style the built interior and established exterior, although this interior is not at all the same as that of the existing building, but created to suit the action of the story.

To explain: View a picture sometime in which a character is shown approaching the exterior of some building, which he enters. As the camera cuts to the interior, do the doors and windows seem to occupy the same relative positions inside as they did outside?

If they were casement windows outside are they French windows inside? Is the character of the Architecture and Decoration inside what you have been led to ex-

pect from the exterior? It would be obviously inconsistent for a character to enter a stone front mansion and find himself in a cow shed, and yet some of the inconsistencies I have seen on the screen, while not so glaring, were equally ridiculous to an intelligent person.

Fanciful settings, such as the setting for a fairy tale episode, trick and effect stuff, furnish wide play for the imagination of the Art Director and his assistants. They demand also an immense amount of ingenuity and inventiveness. In the Roscoe Arbuckle feature, "Brewster's Millions," you saw Roscoe appear as a child, an effect accomplished by the use of trick setting. This was simply the application of known laws of proportion, for as our impression of size is gained by relativity, to make him appear just half his real size, every article of furniture, doors, walls, were reproduced just twice normal size.

In "The Love Special" with Wallace Reid, Wallie drove a locomotive through a blizzard. As this story was produced in California in the usual mild weather, it was necessary to reproduce the interior of a locomotive cab on the stage and supply the wind and snow, artificially. The locomotive cab, built from accurate drawings made by one of the Art Department staff, was mounted on heavy coiled springs to secure the proper vibration, a powerful aeroplane motor and propellor furnished the wind and rock salt and powdered asbestos registered on the screen as a sure enough blizzard.

Cinderella palaces of glass, such as were used in C. B. DeMille's production, "Forbidden Fruit," and in the construction of which over forty thousand dollars worth of plate glass alone was used; the palace of the Snow Queen with a great skating floor of real ice and a weirdly wonderful aurora borealis; water fetes with gorgeous dining barges and swan boats; the great hall, library, reception hall and entire suite of bed rooms of an English Baronial Castle and the war vault of the Emperor Wilhelm with its fiendish instruments of murder, called a storeroom of Moloch; both of which you will see in George Melford's picture, "The Great Impersonation," follow in kaleidoscopic variety in the vast web of backgrounds.

Every day brings a new problem and a new corner of the globe to the attention of the Art Department. We are sometimes called "the stay at home" travelers of the studio, for we often work in four or five different countries in the course of one week. To the Art Director and his assistants, the phrase, "it can't be done," just doesn't exist. It must be done! And in a "helluvahurry!"



Mirrors

By Dorothea Moore

Who goes to look at the silver screen?
Myself and my neighbor duly;
And up and down and in between
What do we want on the silver screen?
Myself and my neighbor—truly.



HE WAS interviewing the famous girl screen writer. While she discussed, most seriously, the subtleties of plot and characterization—and at the same time was prolonging the conversation so that she could use him as a low comedy type in a scenario she was writing, he was hoping she'd never stop talking so that he could continue to marvel at the artistic curves of her silk clad ankles.



TO ALL intents and purposes, the high brow critics who dislike photoplays are dead—though unburied; Art or Life itself, compressed into any rigid form, greatly resembles Death. Life is fluid, and with live people, even opinions change.

Why Conceal The Truth?

By Earl Percy

THE reflections of a student and his impressions of the verdure along the path of screen-essentials are set down here.

These impressions are not intended as a dogmatic presentation of principles, but merely a statement of things as he sees them. It is quite possible that his vision is incorrect in certain details.

Why do some people write, paint or compose music in an effort to express themselves, while others contentedly plod like beasts of burden, or frantically seek power and wealth?

Is not our true life, our only life, mental? A flowing river of ideas and mental pictures? Our every act is preceded by a thought and is an effort to perpetuate that thought.

If we submerge self and look out upon this mental universe, untold beauties are revealed and we strive to express them; — convey them to others.

If we see only self; we strive to aggrandize that image in material life to the exclusion of all else.

Is not this some approximation of the difference between the creative mind and the self-centered mind? Certain it is that the self-centered mind seldom, if ever, poscesses creative ability.

What is "romance"; that wonderful glamour which attends an uninteresting bit of narrative and serves it to us poignant with suspense and emotion?

Is not "romance" that intangible interest which attaches itself to things whose prosaic details are softened by time, distance or other mental perspective?

For example, the horrible details of the World War still linger in memory, too sharply defined to soft-focus interesting extremes of chivalry and bestiality, courage and cowardice, daring and caution, selflessness and selfishness, genius and every-day duty.

The Civil War is to us a beautiful, but vague picture of blue-and-gray, Southern belles, picturesque characters and white-haired darkies. Yet "Dad" tells us the soldiers wallowed in trenches, died of fever, starved in prison and fought in rags. Graft was rampant; treachery on every side; disabled soldiers uncared for after the war.

Again; — an everyday man has known an everyday girl for years. A bit of moonlight hides her freckles; a filmy dress rounds out the pathetically slender form. The touch of a hand; a tender voice; and the perspective of romance has stripped the barrier of mundane details from between two souls. A delicate thing; a foolishness; but strong enough to bind those two so long as consciousness endures.

Is not fiction interesting because it reveals these moments which men and women naturally conceal from the world? It is instinctive in mankind to conceal what is in the mind. It is doubly instinctive to conceal what is in the heart. The material world is a false world revealing the things we pretend to do and concealing the real things our minds and hearts do. Business, labor, are merely the symbols of the things we really do.

Two people shake hands and mutter a

What Are Your Inner Thoughts?

DO we all wear masks? Are most of our conversations and our outward actions mere shields concealing our real thoughts? Is the material world a false world? Mr. Percy, a mature thinker, believes the photo-dramatist should reveal these inner desires, motives and conflicts.

few banal words; but the clasp is warm; the eyes say: "I like you. I would like to know you better. Your face looks interesting. What are your thoughts, what is your inner life?"

Or a man labors; but why? Is it for the family whose image illumined by love never leaves his mind? Or is he a sullen beast of burden, whose mind is without love, filled with black images of hate, rebellion and pessimism?

Is it not the task of the photodramatist to reveal the conflict within the hearts and minds of men and women? To lay bare their motives, aspirations and hopes? Then to tell the story of their struggles to attain their desires? Or their pathetic surrender to overwhelming conditions?

The strength of climax appears to be in ratio to the conflicting motives and aspirations of the characters. If this is so, the work must be done in the preparations for the climax, rather than the climax itself.

Do not situations exist by virtue of the preparation for them rather than the mechanics of the situation itself?

What pitiful attempts we see to ensnare the spirit of romance on the screen! We behold a half million dollar spectacle with weary cynicism, and hang breathlessly on the sheer appeal of a simple story which approaches truth.

While not an iconoclast, the writer was delighted at the way Mr. Rupert Hughes dynamites our silly reverence for the classics, in the May "Photodramatist." Their characters are strutting puppets on the screen. This is particularly so with historical classics. Was Napoleon's life spent with his hand in his vest and a far away look in his eyes? The biography by his secretary says that he listened at keyholes, liked perfumery, was vain, jealous, had a fearful temper, was a wonderful hypocrite, feared Talleyrande, etc.

The writer has heard that *"Julius Caesar"* failed commercially as a film. He saw it some years ago, and thought then that it would be more interesting if Caesar would stop strutting, would tell a joke, stub his toe, exhibit human mannerisms, and show the humor with which his wonderful sense of proportion undoubtedly endowed him. The Shakespeare version is more human than the screen production.

Is it not the same with the Greek Gods of Mythology, and modern symbolical plays? The expressionless idealism of the characters is entirely over the heads of the audience; if indeed they have any real meaning outside the imagination of the writers. Even the chesty strut of the matinee hero of last year makes the sophisticated audience of today laugh; while the human, lovable, half tipsy Sidney Carton will live forever in the grand simplicity of his sacrifice.

The audience of today unconsciously knows all the old tricks of the stage. They resent the artificialities of the star, without knowing what they are. The star's "grand entrance" and "climactic exit" are not true to life. The audience is tired of seeing the star in contrasting clothes. They take a liking to some capable girl in the supporting cast, or manly chap, or expressive face; then wonder why that one turns her back, or unnaturally melts into background when the story naturally calls her to the front.

A common conversation in the average family today is about as follows:

"Let's go to the movies tonight."

"Oh, I'm tired of 'em. They're all alike."

Sometimes, for information, we ask questions.

"What's the matter with 'em?"

"Aw, we always know who the star is; and we always know she'll go through a lot of trouble and end up with a clinch."

"What kind of stories would you like?"

"Well, now, take 'Humoresque' or the 'Miracle Man'; you couldn't foresee the end; and you couldn't tell which was the star. They were fair to middlin' stories. I'm tired of 'heeroes' and 'heeroines.'"



SUSPENSE: A woodland lake; railroad tracks; a girl of nineteen drops a bathing suit on the warm grass; she loosens her dress; a freight train jolts slowly past; the girl is enjoying her swim immensely; fade-out.



INSPIRATIONS FOR PHOTOPLAYS: A book written a thousand years ago; a face that looks and passes in the street.

The Winning Essays

"Why I Am Writing Photoplays"

THE PHOTODRAMATIST, in its July number, conducted an essay contest, limited to amateur screen writers and students, on the subject of "Why I Am Writing Photoplays." We received over fifteen hundred essays, from which we selected the three prize winners. As we announced in our August number, Minnie L. Van Vliet of Montour Falls, N. Y., wrote the first prize essay; second prize was captured by May Carey Miller of Lima, Ohio; the third prize was awarded to H. L. Viser of Shreveport, Louisiana.

It was with the utmost care and deep concern that we made our selections. There were so many good essays—we selected the final three from one hundred that showed exceptional thought and expression—that it is just possible other judges would have selected three other essays. In all selective work of this type, the human equation—the emotional hypothesis—is active.

Here are the three winning essays:

FIRST PRIZE ESSAY

By Minnie L. Van Vliet

HAVATRIAH to the Cinemaites, Greeting:

Now it hath come unto mine ears, even as the portentous thud of the rejection slip ,that the house of Scribblem the Coronaite hath gone up with ail his brethren before the Contest Editor. Wherefore I say unto thee, incline thou thine head and reveal not that which thou hearest, that thou be not afflicted with Blue Law Reformers, for verily I say unto thee, Censorship glowereth where it listeth, and thy brain-child and thy whale of an idea shall be as things that are not.

And it came to pass that certain hopeful literature came unto a damsel swiftly and with despatch, and she did wrestle mightily therewith; and behold days went by, and likewise weeks, and new hopes and the advice of friends, yea, even the follow-up letters were unto her as brothers and as a bill that is not paid.

Then there came forth from the land of the Hopefulites three mighty Forces, Deep Experience and Creative Joy and Past Success, and they arose and spake unto her saying, "Lo, stand forth, even though thy literary striving be unto thee even as a Greased Pig which eludeth thy grasp." And the damsel wept sore and was as postage stamps well licked, but she stood forth and strove valiantly.

And Deep Experience cried aloud unto her saying, "Bestir thyself, damsel, and be even as the established author—on the job. Behold I say unto thee, seek not thou the unknown: for who better than thou knoweth the joy and the sorrow of life, its whatness, or its whenceness, or anything which is its?"

And lo, Creative Joy cried lustily saying, "Heed not the giant Discouragement which goeth about like a roaring lion, but be thou even as a Fairbanks picture which is full of pep. For lo, the Effort Laid Aside cloggeth thy footsteps, and the Alsoranite waileth aloud, but the Sales Department Manager sweepeth the market with her eye!"

Then cometh Past Success saying, "Take heed to thyself lest thou be forgetful that thy Creator when He maketh an oak tree taketh thereto an hundred years, but when in three months He finisheth His task, lo, it is a Squash!"

Wherefore, brethren, the damsel took unto her bosom her writing implements and her new-born determination, yea, her Handbook, her Plot Encyclopedia and her Sample Scenarios, even so took she them.

And it came to pass that in due time kindly words of encouragement came to her which were as the dews of evening upon the parched grass or as the succulent ice cream cone to the filibustering politician.

So verily I say unto thee, better is it to seek after self-expression, yea, even though with thy back to the wall thou goest down with colors flying, rather than meekly to yield up thine aspirations to the lash of criticism and failure which barketh at thine heels. Selah.

SECOND PRIZE ESSAY

By May Carey Miller

IN THE old days of two reelers there appeared a picture the story of which was built around an old man who spent his days helping the poor, living and suffering with them. As he went cheerfully about his tasks no one knew that rooted deep in his old heart was an unsatisfied longing: he had always wanted to possess a *high silk hat.* Whenever he had nearly enough money to get it, a neighborhood need would come up and the money would be gone. Finally, when he was broken and old, a legacy was left him. For the first time he really had more money than he needed, but all it meant to him was that now he could have his high silk hat. The hat was bought and the rest of the money spent on his beloved poor. True, he was not the debonair young dude who had first longed to dazzle the world, but it was also true that the debonair young dude would never have experienced the real joy that was the old man's when at last he possessed his treasure. If I remember rightly, he died of joy.

Now, I am not broken and old, nor will I ever die of joy, but somehow I have always had a kindred feeling for this old man. My father was an artist, my sister a musician, and my brother an orator and writer, hence I may be accused of having a bit of temperament. Be that as it may, as early as my fifth year I ingloriously fell from a balcony, knocking my front teeth crooked, while playing Juliet to an imaginary Romeo. This something in me kept on growing, and when I was about twelve years old it was recognized and the opportunity offered for me to go on the stage. No one dreamed of the anguish in my little girl heart when the family decided I was entirely too young. Several times during my 'teens opportunity knocked again, but always there was something to prevent. Usually it was the dollar, for I dared not stop the pay envelope long enough to rehearse. Then came the responsibility of a home, and again, and to all appearances forever, the great longing had to be stifled. I wrote a few short stories, but though the ideas may have been good they were poorly done, and as promptly returned. Also, I attempted a few scenarios. They all came back in record time. I realized that I did not know how to *express.* However, I never gave up! The philosophy of life to which I ascribe has taught me that only wrong motive can prevent me from doing that work which is mine to do, and it has given me a higher standard of thought. My mirror told me that I would never, personally, dazzle an audience, but I was confident that if I could only put it on paper I could do it *through some one else.*

I have worked hard, but have been abundantly repaid by the real joy of the work. I've lived each character, acted each part, cried and laughed with them and, when I received word from Mrs. Corbaley that my first story, which had come back three times for revision, had at last been accepted and sent to her department I felt pretty close to the old man with his high silk hat. I had at last created characters who to me were as real as friends, and some day when I see them on the screen, and I am confident that I will, you may know that I'll be back in the audience somewhere saying, "You may none of you look like me, but you are all, from the beautiful young wife down to the awkward old gardener, *me.*" I'll have my high silk hat.

And, as I stated, no matter in what measure success should come I'll not die of joy. I will just go right on working harder.

I will not return any checks that might come my way, but all the money in the world could not realize my ambition nor satisfy my longing, which can only be done by mastering the art of putting down on paper so clearly that "he who runs may read" that dramatic sense that ,since my little girl days,has struggled for expression. It is my high silk hat.

THIRD PRIZE ESSAY

By H. L. Viser

THE Mythology of the Ancient Greeks is replete with circumstances imposed on struggling mortals to satisfy merely a celestial whim or fancy. Often and again was it only by the most strenuous efforts that the noble Ulysses escaped utter annihilation, simply because it pleased some god or goddess to throw obstruction in his path. No doubt it was great sport for the Olympian Dynasty; surely it was a great system that permitted such wholesale realization of pleasure.

And yet, that same motive underlies much of human activity today. "Because I wanted to—I enjoyed it,' 'is almost the universal alibi. To be frank, it is mine in aspiring to write photoplays.

As an accountant, my greatest joy was in the systematizing of some phase of my client's work. The more intricate the re-

quirements, the greater the pleasure derived from the solution. Gradually there came the realization that the act of creation brought the greatest satisfaction. The fee oftentimes remained uncollected, it was a side-issue. I gazed on the result of my labors much in the same mood an Architect feels after designing an imposing structure, or an Engineer, in viewing some particularly outstanding piece of construction. And with this realization came the natural suggestion that the conscious development of this aptitude should be an ever increasing source of satisfaction. A mere glimmer of light, the main idea definite and clear-cut, but the means of execution vague, hazy, lost in mist.

So matters stood for some time. Then a mere chance connected the "hunch" with the writing of photoplays. Here was everything to gain and nothing to lose; a study of the subject would at least be interesting and instructive, even though the natural goal of a successful photoplay might never be achieved.

No doubt you think it a long jump from a dry, musty subject like Accounting, with principles lost in a labyrinth of precedent, to the breezy art of writing photoplays and its concomitant freedom of thought and action; the one dealing in hard, cold-blooded facts and can't-lie figures, the other allowing free rein to the imagination. Again it is the creative instinct which bridges the chasm—although the drama, too, is ever present in both. Witness the benighted bookkeeper two cents out of balance with cold supper and angry spouse both spelling Tragedy.

That the study of photoplay writing will prove an inexhaustible mountain spring of pleasure, I am convinced. That it will be instructive, or a possible source of revenue, is incidental. My ideas are entirely selfish, to begin with; having no special creed to impose on others, no preconceived notions of talent to explode, no half-baked scenarios to sell. These ideas, of course, will change; progress itself is but change for the better; yet the keystone will remain steadfast, the simple joy of creative expression.

Oh, the joy of creative expression, than which there is none greater; the one connecting link between Divinity and Man; the dynamic conception back of all human progress and achievement, from Alexander to Napoleon ,and from Socrates to Emerson; different in degree, but not in essence; somewhere, in some form, a part of Everyman's equipment, often dormant, frequently misdirected, yet ever present so long as Life itself remains.

And as an after-thought, it may be fittingly said the impudence of this article is only excusable, in that the joy of writing it infinitely surpasses anything you can possibly derive from reading it.



Eccentricities

THE world's geniuses had their eccentricities in the manner of doing their work. For instance, Schiller put his feet in ice while he sat in a room filled with the odor of bad apples. Milton buried his head in cushions and blankets. Rousseau preferred to have the sun beating on his head, while Shelley wrote with his head close to the fire.

Quite a number of people have discovered the advantages of thinking in bed; but of the intellectual giants who always preferred this method, Descartes and Leibnitz are noteworthy.

Lecky, the historian, modified the method; he used to kneel upon a specially constructed sofa and write upon the head of it, so that the line between head and heart was horizontal and the blood flow thereby aided. The same result was secured more comfortably by Swinburne, who used to write while lying on the floor.

In contrast to these, Victor Hugo always stood upright at his desk. Herbert Spencer used to utilize physical exercise, perhaps the best method of all. After rowing, or playing with a ball for a time, he would sit down and dictate. Later he would try more exercise, and so on.

—*Evening Journal, N. Y.*



THE MOTION PICTURE: The Brotherhood of Man's text book.

Questions Answered

Concerning the Writing of Photoplays

Q.—How do you make your characters strong or weak, if it is not by the little human things they do?—G. H. C.

A.—By all means your characters are shown to be strong or weak by the things that they do.

Q.—Is it necessary for a gentle, lovable character to show special strength to win the sympathy of an audience, especially if it is a girl in support of a male lead?—G. H. C.

A.—A character may be gentle and lovable and yet be strong in a moral or ethical way. Strength does not necessarily mean physical strength. A gentle, lovable character may be tempted to do a wrong and in resisting the temptation may be morally strong although physically weak.

Q.—What is the advantage, if any, in a nom de plume?—G. H. C.

A.—There is no particular advantage in using a nom de plume. I think it is well to use one's own name unless there is some good reason for doing otherwise.

Q.—Some authors tell you to visualize your story as it will appear on the screen, and others say to forget it is to be a screen play and imagine it real life. Which course am I to follow?—H. V.

A.—In writing a photoplay it is necessary to visualize this as it will appear upon the screen. In building your plot and developing your characters, however, you must make the characters real and the action plausible. To do this you must from time to time visualize your characters and your action as they would be in real life. It is very good practice to analyze short stories or novels and ,visualizing them, try to decide whether they would be adaptable to the screen or not. This is merely for practice, of course, for it is a waste of time to try to adapt the work of other people to the screen. Any short stories, novels, or stage plays that contain real screen material are purchased by producers as quickly as possible, and as a rule when anyone calls such material to the attention of a producer, it is found that it has already been purchased.

Q.—Is it possible to photograph the colors of thought forms thrown off by the actors?—E. M. H.

A.—It would not be practical to overstress the colors of thought form for this would require elaborate explanation. A large number of people are familiar with these things, and yet the greater proportion of any audience knows nothing of them. In a novel one could go into lengthy explanations, but this is impossible in the photoplay.

Q.—What about reincarnation as photoplay material?

A.—In dealing with the subject of reincarnation ,the author must not go too deeply into details with which the average member of an audidence is unfamiliar. Reincarnation must be dealt with in a more or less superficial way in presenting the subject upon the screen.

Q.—Is it all right to use an aeroplane in my story?—E. M. H.

A.—An aeroplane may be used in a photoplay provided there is a sufficiently logical reason for such a trip.

Q. How close may one come to using an idea or situation that has been used by another and yet not be accused of plagiarism?

A. It is better not to try to see how close one may come to plagiarism. Occasionally, however, one may have an idea or a plot that seems to resemble one that has been used and yet that is just enough different and just novel enough to be really original. There are only a handful of fundamental dramatic situations and most any plot will resemble others in some respects. To evolve an absolutely original plot using incidents that have never been used before is next to impossiblbe. Frequently one may hit upon an idea that one has never heard of before and find that it has been used a number of times. The best rule to follow is to be as original as possible, giving new and novel "twists" to old situations when they are used, and to investigate thoroughly if you feel that you are infringing upon the rights of others. Good ideas are not easy to create—it requires real mental effort to evolve them—therefore they are the sacred property of their originators. The photodramatist who is to be permanently successful must have a high respect for the rights of others, else he will fall into bad repute, and a lost reputation is not easily regained.

Q. I hear so much about the limitations that are being imposed upon motion picture productions by state boards of censorship that I am confused as to what I may include in my stories and what I must eliminate. Will you advise me?

A. Censorship, foisted upon motion pictures by meddling morons of narrow vision and impure minds, is a malignant menace to the advancement of our great art. Fortunately a large majority of the states have defeated bills that have been presented in attempts to create such boards. There is a national board of censors, officially known as the National Board of Review, which works in close harmony with the National Committee for Better Films, and its rulings are quite sufficient to protect the nation from moral disintegration and spiritual degradation. Go ahead and write your stories with a view to creating natural dramatic situations, and do not permit the censorship bugaboo to scare you. When in doubt, write into your stories what seems to be necessary to make them real screen dramas, avoiding, of course, grossly indecent or lascivious incidents and characters that are unwholesome merely for the sake of being sensational. We may safely rely upon the good, sound horse-sense of the American people to kill the censorship inanity that has been fostered by drooling reformers, and force a return to mental normalcy.

Gossip Street

From Hollywood Boulevard to Times Square

Youth Eternal

Bebe Daniels is scoring a tremendous hit in "One Wild Week," the original photoplay written especially for her by Frances Harmer. The spirit of youth gallops rampantly through the entire story, neck and neck with mirth and hilarity. Incidentally, Miss Harmer recently celebrated her sixty-third birthday.

The Ultimate Ride

News comes from Fox that "Riding With Death," an original photoplay by Agnes Parsons and Jacques Jaccard, is now in course of production.

Russian Cinematization

Trains equipped with motion picture machines and films are being run through Siberia, giving exhibitions at each railroad station, according to Julius Kohner, Czecho-Slovakian cinema authority and publisher of "Filmschau," one of the well known international trade journals, who recently arrived in this country. The Soviet government is strongly in favor of the development of motion pictures and is paying great attention to the community effects of "movie" theaters, he says.

The government has encouraged the erection of picture playhouses, which are operated by a commission of the Soviet government. There are today some 3000 picture houses in Russia and more are being added constantly. A large opening awaits American pictures in Russia as soon as trade agreements are established between that country and the United States.

Number 34

When production is started on Charles A. Logue's "The Infidel," at the Katherine MacDonald studio of the Ambassador Pictures Corporation, Logue will be called on for advice in many details of the filming. The story is Logue's thirty-fourth screen acceptance. Miss MacDonald's stellar role holds promising possibilities.

Back to Eden

Miss Eve Unsell, scenario editor, recently arrived from New York to take charge of the R-C Studios scenario department. Among those whom Miss Unsell brought West with her are Garrett Elsden Fort, assistant editor; Miss Carol Warren, head reader; Miss Zara Mendel, secretary, and Joseph Rothman, assistant film editor and reader.

Want Stories

Hoot Gibson's recently completed story, "Bransford of Rainbow Ridge," will be on the screen about the time that he starts "Headin' West," an original story by Harvey Gates.

While Universal has enough stories in reserve to keep its battalion of stars busy for several months, Irving G. Thalberg has commissioned Hubbard to search for additional screen material, particularly for Miss Dean, Carey, Marie Prevost, Miss duPont and Gibson.

Clairvoyance

Raymond Hatton is playing the principal character in "His Back Against the Wall," a Julian Josephson story, for Goldwyn. Josephson wrote of New York, the West and ordinary farms—but all he has ever seen is the West itself.

Moon Stories

Lorna Moon of "Don't Tell Everything" fame, is now attached to the Realart staff. Her first story, "Too Much Wife," will star May McAvoy.

Uplift

Bill Wright, out at Universal City in charge of serials, suggests that now the censors are guests at Universal City the time is auspicious to impress upon them the vital importance of taking a dignified, but firm stand, against these movie evils:

Mustache cups.

Skinny elbows showing in closeups.

Prominent Adam's apples.

Movie wallpaper.

Drinking out of saucers in banquet scenes.

Back Again

E. Richard Schayer, scenario writer for B. B. Hampton, has returned to his desk from the first week's vacation he has taken in two and one-half years.

Signed Up

Mary Murillo has joined the scenario and continuity department of R-C Pictures Corporation and will work on original stories

and continuity at the New York headquarters of that organization.

Miss Murillo's previous connections have been with Sydney Franklin's Productions and the Fox Film Corporation.

Mysterious Violet

"According to officials of R-C Pictures Corporation, Doris May's first story will be an original, not yet named, which is a splendid example of the particular type of modern comedy-drama, which is to guide the scenario department of the new unit. It now is being prepared in continuity form by Violet Clarke.

From Europe

Julia Crawford Ivers, scenarist and supervisor at Lasky's, has volumes to say regarding the trip to Europe from which she has just returned. Chiefly she regrets the fact that pictures using European backgrounds can't be photographed against these backgrounds instead of artificial ones constructed in the studio—but she is positive that all the continental film makers will be many years overtaking Americans in technical details of the art. Mrs. Ivers lived in London with a friend, Maude Allen, the dancer, now appearing at the Coliseum there.

The Angel of Change

"If I were a violinist I'd be delighted at learning to play the piano. Being a writer —I'm overjoyed at discovering that I can tell stories via the celluloid." This from Elinor Glyn, as she announced the conclusion of her contract with Famous Players-Lasky—and her immediate alliance with the Ruby Hill Productions, in which Mrs. Glyn is to have entire supervision of the stories, cast and director, and will write four original scenarios a year, for a remuneration that would be considered by some folks a comfortable earning for a life time.

Spinning Hick Yarns

Julian Josephson, who first made a name for himself as an author of stories dealing with small-town life, in which Charles Ray was starred, has oiled up his typewriter and turned out "The City Feller," which has been purchased by the Goldwyn studio for early production. This new story has a small town for its locale and is said to be in Mr. Josephson's best vein. Because of the press of editorial duties in the Goldwyn scenario department, this is the first original photoplay Mr. Josephson has written in more than a year, the last being "Home Spun Folks," produced by Thomas H. Ince. Some of his stories for Ray were "The Hired Man," "String Beans," "Greased Lightning," "The Egg-Crate Wallop" and "Paris Green."

The Florist's Slogan

Alice Duer Miller is writing another original screen story. It is called "Say It With Flowers,' 'and will probably star Tom Moore.

Rob Wagner's Latest

Charles Ray's "R. S. V. P." is ready to go East. A private showing of the film was given this week before Rob Wagner, author of the story; Mrs. Wagner, John McCormick, Western representative of Associated First National Pictures, Inc., and a few carefully selected critics.

Demand Originals

That the Goldwyn company is looking for stories written directly for the screen is the statement of Paul Bern, newly appointed scenario editor. Mr. Bern adds that it is not necessary that the writers have established reputations, inasmuch as stories will be considered purely on their worth.

The editor believes that the best screen material can be obtained from those authors who think in terms of pictures and who write with the camera in mind. He says that novels and plays lose something in process of adaptation.

The company produces a number of stories by its eminent authors, but it is pointed out that they can write only a limited number of stories and that production plans necessitate the purchase of material from the outside.

"The great screen play," says Mr. Bern, "will only be written when it is a purely original effort expressed in picture terms, born of a picture mind and translatable to another medium only with a loss of effectiveness and power."

Page Einstein

Alice Eyton, Realart scenarist, comes forward with an illuminating theory that the reason advice is so seldom followed is that it is just the reagent needed to clarify one's own ideas and confirm one's own choice. Hm—some fellows would say she feels that way just because she's a woman.

Mt. Olympus News

Rupert Hughes has written four original stories for the screen—"The Old Nest," "Dangerous Curve Ahead," "From the Ground Up" and "The Wall Flower." The first three have been completed; the fourth is now in course of production.

Izaak Walton

If you happen around Catalina Island and see a man sitting dreaming or pushing a pencil while tuna bite insolently at the bait he has laid out, know that it's Lucien Hubbard, scenario chief of Universal. He thinks fishing from a motorboat provides proper solitude in which to hear the whisperings of the muse. A script or two will result.

Tender Memories

The now extinct "Midnight Frolic" has been perpetuated on film in Constance Talmadge's next "Good For Nothing," an original story by John Emerson and Anita Loos.

Dublin Papers Please Copy

"Pat O' Paradise" is the title of Lester Cuneo's next feature picture, according to Charles A. Mack of the Doubleday Productions. The story will be in five-reel western style and is from the pens of Leo Meehan and Henry McCarty.

Finis

Ethel Clayton has just completed her picture, "Exit the Vamp," Clara Beranger's original story.

Marion Orth's Original

Pauline Frederick is now working on "The Lure of Jade," an original story by Marion Orth.

Mrs. Otis Skinner

The future of the two-reel drama, long absent from the screen as a representative form of picture production, seems now definitely assured. At least, it would appear to be from the continued activity of the Selig-Rork organization, which has now completed the third of the series they are making. The title of the new picture is "The Ne'er-to-Return Road," which bears the distinction of having been written by Mrs. Otis Skinner.

Brothers

Ewart Adamson, brother of Penrhyn Stanlaws, has just sold an original story to Elmer Harris, supervising director of Realart. It is a story of the South Seas and will serve as the starring vehicle of Mary Miles Minter. Frank Urson will direct.

In Manhattan

Christy Cabanne is in New York filming "The Barricade," an original story by Dr. Daniel Carson Goodman.

Endurance Note

Records for long runs of plays or pictures have been shattered by a split-reel comedy, "The First Skating Party," made by and featuring Max Linder 16 years ago in Paris. The film has run continuously each year and as usual will be exhibited this winter. It has such an attraction that the people demand its showing every autumn, as it pictures many funny Linder stunts in the snow and on the ice.

Henry and Leo At It

Lester Cuneo began work during the past week on a new five-reel western, which is to be distributed by Irving W. Lesser. The story was written especially for Cuneo by Henry McCarty and Leo Meehan, who did the first Cuneo independent, "Blue Blazes." The new picture will go on the screen as "Behind the Mask."

In Court

Mildred Considine, scenario writer, has sued Douglas Fairbanks and Mark Pickford for $11,500 because her name was omitted from the films as author of "Thru the Back Door," Mary's latest picture.

"Loss of prestige and humiliation" to the extent of $11,500 are alleegd to have resulted.

With Palmer

George Elwood Jenks, formerly with Keystone, Vogue, Triangle, Jesse D. Hampton, H. B. Warner, Robert Brunton, Pathe and Metro, has become a member of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation staff as Associate Editor in the Department of Education. Mr. Jenks is the author of many original photodramas, as well as a well known writer of continuities. He has written for William Desmond, Blanche Sweet, Olive Thomas, Pauline Starke, J. Warren Kerrigan, Margery Wilson, William Russell and many other stars, but under his contract with the Palmer people will devote his entire time to that institution.

Shades of Schopenhauer

Catch 'em young, treat 'em rough, tell 'em nothing! That's the creed of the caveman, according to Al Rockett, who makes pictures occasionally with that type of male featured.

"And leave 'em where you find 'em," amends his brother, Ray.

Everybody's Doin' It

Writers for the screen have been recruited from every possible walk of life. Even the singers are deserting their chosen profession, giving up the striving after high notes in favor of a scenarist's cubby hole.

Latest to join the Realart studio editorial staff under Supervising Director Elmer Harris is Grace Drew, who sprang into fame some years ago as the prima donna

of two of the most successful musical comedies in stage history, "The Chocolate Soldier" and "Alma, Where Do You Live?"

Swiss Like Us

American-made films, warm with human interest, are crowding out the Italian product in the 178 theaters in Switzerland, according to reports received from the Alpine republic.

Two Originals

Gloria Swanson's forthcoming pictures for Paramount are to be a series of "strong dramatic productions," the next one being "Beyond the Rocks." She will also do "The Ordeal," an original story by W. Somerset Maugham.

On the Market

Word comes from the scenario department of the Iris Pictures Company, that they are looking for suitable stories to be used as vehicles for the company's star, John Keith, and for a series of special productions which this company intends to produce on the Pacific Coast.

Behold The Women

Among the most important women playwrights who have provided plots for recent First National plays are Anita Loos, Madge Tyrone, Lucita Squier and Dorothy Farnum. Anita Loos has recently written seven big plays for Constance Talmadge and "The Branded Woman" for Norma Talmadge. Madge Tyrone of the Louis B. Mayer organization wrote two of Anita Stewart's recent plays and three for Mildren Harris Chaplin. Lucita Squier is Marshall Neilan's skillful aide, while Dorothy Farnum of Whitman Bennett's staff has written three Lionel Barrymore plays and one for Constance Talmadge.

First National's long list of women who have contributed to the success of its photoplays reveals that there are hundreds of American women gaining fame as authors and scenarists.

Realart Notes

William D. Taylor is making preparations for the next May McAvoy production for which Julia Crawford Ivers is writing the scenario.

Alice Eyton is finshing the scenario which will be the next vehicle for Mary Miles Minter. It will be a January release.

Two-Reel Market

Irving Cummings Productions, Inc., is in the market for two-reel Northwest Mounted Police stories. Applicants are referred to Dick L'Estrange, general manager.

News from Poland

Joseph Franklin Poland, Thomas H. Ince scenario writer, is completing the continuity of an original story which, it is reported, will be placed in production within the next few weeks.

Prepare to Weep

"The Idle Class," a travesty on the weaknesses of the wealthy, will be Charles Chaplin's next contribution to the gayety of the nations.

Associated

Ralph Block, former dramatic critic of the New York Tribune, and Clayton Hamilton, one-time professor of dramatic literature in Columbia university, are now associate scenario editors at Goldwyn's.

Henry's First

William D. Taylor's production of Henry Arthur Jones' first original screen story has been entitled "Beyond." It stars Ethel Clayton, and will be released late in Otcober by Paramount.

Superstition

Col. Jasper Ewing Brady, of the Metro Film Company, has written a mystery play called "Superstition," which is going into rehearsal under the direction of Lee Morrison within a week.

Jeanie MacPherson

Cecil de Mille has definitely announced that he will not begin his next picture for at least two weeks. He will do an original by Jeanie MacPherson, of small cast, not yet announced, and along the domestic drama idea which made his earlier pictures, "Don't Change Your Husband,' 'and others, so tremendously successful.

Bill Is Right

Pity the poor scenario writer. He toils and spins, but he gathers no moss ,to hash up a few metaphors.

Bill Parker, who has offended to the extent of several hundred or more screen stories and scenarios, says that the future of a scenario writer depends on the original stories he writes.

If, argues Parker, an adapted story is a success most of the credit goes to the director, next comes the author of the story. Sometimes the continuity writer is mentioned, and sometimes he is not.

But—and this is the fly in the ointment of the continuity writer—if the picture is a "flop" everybody passes the buck to the poor, toiling scenario writer.

Photoplays in Review

By the Staff

"Greater Than Love"

Opinion is going to differ widely in the case of "Greater Than Love," C. Gardner Sullivan's most recent piece of original screen writing. For those who esteem their conception of love as "the greatest thing in the world," the title will seem utterly meaningless—until face to face with the photoplay. Then it will be seen that Mr. Sullivan refers to a love that transcends love of dress, love of self, and the indiscriminate love of luxury and ease. However, as poets and philosophers have striven throughout recorded history to capture the ultimate meaning of love, and as there are almost as many definitions as there are people on the globe, we can probably condone the ambiguity of the title with the realization that it was specially designed—and most effectively—for the box office. As to whether there is anything greater than the ultimate meaning of love, that is something that no poor finite can determine. In an infinite universe there are infinite possibilities. All words are arbitrary and fluid, subject to common and sectional usage.

At any rate, C. Gardner Sullivan devised a most intrigueing title; as to his story, ah!—I prophesy much wrangling among the critics. The self-conceded "intellectuals" will pooh-pooh this yarn, as being predicated upon a purely emotional hypothesis. They will probably deem it sensational stuff and will question the validity of the theme, which is based on the assumption that unshaken belief in intrinsic goodness will regenerate those whom the faithful one contacts. The story parallels "The Miracle Man"—in fact, it might have been titled "The Miracle Woman."

Technically it is a masterpiece of construction. A masterful handling of situations and crises, enveloping the exalted motif, makes this photoplay tremendously gripping and inspirational—for those intuitionally developed to a degree whereby they feel a something eternally significant, noumenal, rarefied, in mother-love. Only those who have long eaten the dried-up fruit of sophistication will fail to respond to Mr. Sullivan's great sweeps of poignant drama.

The plot is almost perfect; the characterizations keenly and vividly drawn. A slight undercurrent of romance is introduced, which like a counter-melody, merely serves to emphasize the beauty and power of the main theme.

The night life of New York is somewhat overdrawn and some of the scenes are palpably sensational. It is also questionable if any "painted lily" is offered a better environment through transferring herself from "the chorus" to a stenographic job; while she retains any physical charm she will continue to be pursued by naughty men.

However, these are retrospections; while viewing the picture the sweetness and tenderness of mother-love—overflowing, all-pervasive — softens the few minor incidents which run counter to good taste or logic.

All in all, C. Gardner Sullivan is to be complimented upon evolving a vigorous, compelling photodrama of excellent construction and high purpose.

Synopsis—They "toiled not but cunningly did they spin"—these six "Painted Lilies" of New York's gay life, but the tragic finis written in the life of little Elsie Brown at the hectic climax of Frank Norwood's gay roof garden party brought them sharply to a realization of the emptiness of their careers.

The heart of even Grace Merrill (Louise Glaum) ,the Unregenerate—was filled with sadness and love for the departed "little one" of the heedless group. Then appeared on the scene Elsie's rustic mother, brimming with faith in her chick and innate and unshakable belief in the goodness of the world. All this she had brought from "the little gray home" that had witnessed the birth of her "baby."

Shocked by the arrival of the simple old lady the girls tore down one fabrication—their too-luxurious apartment home—in order to build up another. They pledged themselves to keep alive Mother Brown's faith in her kiddie.

The transformation complete, they endured with qualms of conscience the calm inspection of the mother-heart of their unwelcome visitor. Their plan shattered by the untimely appearance of newspapers blazoning the tragedy of Elsie, the girls, led by Grace ,stand in judgment before the spirit-torn mother. Instead of berating them, however, she blesses them and expresses to them her faith in them. Elsie has "gone onward," she says. She never will be dead to her. She still believes in her—*AND IN THEM.*

One of the girls broke down. Others hysterically vow to try another path in life. Grace alone —Grace the unbeliever, the disciple of self and pleasure—remains unmoved until the departure of the world-weary woman. Then she too welcomes into her heart the germ of the mother-heart's faith. But Grace is pledged to ensnare Bruce Wellington from his wife that Elliott, the suave gambler in whose establishment Grace has cleverly urged prospective victims to venture their fortunes, may win her and her independent fortune. Love comes into Grace's life a deep ,abiding love for manly Wellington, the neglected husband. During another visit of Mother Brown, who has never forgotten "her girls," Grace puts her problem before the old lady as if it were her mother's.

"There is only one happiness," abjures the long-suffering soul. "It lies in unselfishness and renunciation." Grace lies to Wellington in an effort to destroy the affection he bears her and makes him promise to forgive his wife and accept her in the shelter of his arms. Grace has given up material pleasures, her companions are trudging cheerfully by the road of virtues, and she has made the supreme sacrifice of the one redeeming love that she has ever known in order to find the true happiness in which her Conscience may freely share.

She leaves her bed of thorned roses, and with a catch at her throat as she bids it all farewell for ever, goes to the tiny nest of Mother Brown, who welcomes her victorious in her faith.

"Luring Lips"

This story was selected as a starring vehicle for Edith Roberts by Universal. "Luring Lips" is a rather unappropriate title; the story itself was one of the prize winning scenarios in the recent Photoplay Magazine contest; it was written by John A. Moroso.

The story is of the Wall Street "frenzied finance" vintage; but despite the unoriginal theme—the clever twists, human characterizations and surprising plot give it a genuine, sympathetic appeal.

The tempo is even and just fast enough to prevent interest lagging a moment. There are a few situations that are somewhat overdrawn, but may be accepted on the old grounds of dramatic license. At no time is there any hint of the outcome of the story, and the elements of coincidence—which help to further this suspense—are handled strikingly and intelligently.

This photoplay is really a little gem. None of the characters are of the Superman or Superwoman type ;in fact, they are of the middle class —average men and women who would not ordinarily contact high adventure, but who meet the exigencies of life in a humanly helpful, common sense manner.

One of the most effective "plants" ever employed is that of presenting the young bank clerk and his wife seemingly living beyond their means at the opening of the story, in the light of the subsequent theft of money—of which the husband is accused. From then on every device is used to put the audience on the wrong track, yet the ending is quite logical. You are most apt to leave the theatre mumbling to yourself: "Why didn't I suspect that other fellow in the first place?" But you didn't because of a doubting husband, a wife's courage in concealing her true motives, and the apparent friendship of the office manager. Those were the elements which mystified you, and indicate an excellent scenario craftsmanship. Students of photoplay writing would do well to see this photoplay several times.

Synopsis—In the banking offices of Harris Towne & Company, Wall Street, Dave Martin, after years of conscientious service, has reached the position of receiving teller. The office is in charge of Frederick Vibart, Office Manager. A romance had grown until Dave had married Adele, Vibart's private secretary. They live in a small cottage in the Westchestershire Hills. Dave brings Vibart home for dinner at the cottage. Adele dislikes Vibart. Dave is called from the house and Vibart tells Adele that the old days in his office must be forgotten; that it would only interfere with Dave's advancement if he knew. Adele is wrought up, and is only relieved by Dave's return.

Dave and Adele leave for a vacation at a very sumptuous hotel. Adele complains they cannot afford it but Dave tells her that he has the money. The bank discovers that $50,000 has disappeared. Detectives are inclined to suspect Dave. When arrested, he explains he won in a horse race, playing the tip of Fuller, a wastrel clerk.

Vibart, the office manager, formerly Dave's rival for the hand of Adele, pleads leniency for Dave.

Dave is sentenced to one year in prison. Vibart offers Adele her old position in the office, which she accepts. A year later, in the prison theatre, Dave sees Adele in a news weekly taken in Wall Street. She meets Vibart, and they leave together. This brings jealousy into his heart. Tierney, the detective, follows Dave the next day when he leaves, hoping to find the money, which has never appeared in circulation.

The same day Adele accepts Vibart's protestations of love. Vibart has steamship tickets for South America. Adele consents to flee with him and arranges to meet him at the boat. Dave follows Adele to the boat. Vibart has the money in a grip. Dave rushes toward Vibart. Adele grabs the grip from Vibart, who is caught by Tierney. Adele opens the bag and in it is the stolen money.

Adele tells Dave she had woven a web around Vibart and brought him to the point of flying with her, to obtain the money.



Tuning the Instrument

By Edith R. McComas

WE HAVE heard a good deal about never waiting for the mood to write. Ever to work and the mood will come, runs the merry song. "Sit down before your desk and let the waves of thought hit you," etc.

This is good advice—yet the young writer needs also to remember that back and all round of his sensitive mental apparatus is his physical machine. And this machine must be kept in prime condition.

It must be well oiled—with food and air.

It must be well rested, with food and relaxation.

It must be well exercised, yet not speeded up so fast that its muscles lock.

It must be unhurried, beat with an even rhythm.

There must be no rust, worry, which eats the steel.

In other words, if you expect ideas to come to you, and they will come, keep yourself fresh. Eliminate everything but your work at working hours. Don't distract yourself with trying to work along too many lines at once. Remember the ship that cuts s's in the ocean is longer getting to port. Mark the fairy circle round yourself and don't step outside it during the hour.

So you will be able to go full steam ahead, with ballast enough in your hold so that you won't care whether it's sea-gulls, a sign of home, or smoke from your own engine circling round you.

The Photoplay Market

Compiled by Jane Horton

FIVE-REEL DRAMA —FEMALE LEAD

May Allison
Betty Blythe
Alice Brady
Alice Calhoun
Catherine Calvert
Ora Carew
Irene Castle
Helen Chadwick
Mildred Harris Chaplin
Naomi Childers
Ethel Clayton
Betty Compson
Viola Dana
Marion Davies
Priscilla Dean
Eleanor Faire
Elsie Ferguson
Pauline Frederick
Lillian Gish
Corinne Griffith
Vera Gordon
Edith Hallor
Elaine Hammerstein
Juanita Hansen
Wanda Hawley
Alice Joyce
Alice Lake
Florence Lawrence
Louise Lovely
Katherine MacDonald
Vivian Martin
Mae Marsh
May McAvoy
Mary Miles Minter
Carmel Myers
Alla Nazimova
Eva Novak
Jean Paige
Eileen Percy
Mary Pickford
Dorothy Phillips
Ruby de Remer
Irene Rich
Edith Roberts
Ruth Roland
Teddy Sampson
Gloria Swanson
Mabel Julienne Scott
Eileen Sedgwick
Anita Stewart
Blanche Sweet
Norma Talmadge
Rosemary Theby
Florence Vidor
Gladys Walton
Pearl White
Clara Kimball Young

FIVE-REEL DRAMA —MALE LEAD

John Barrymore
Lionel Barrymore
Hobart Bosworth
William Desmond
Elliott Dexter
William Farnum
Sessue Hayakawa
Gareth Hughes
Lloyd Hughes
Thomas Jefferson
J. Warren Kerrigan
James Kirkwood
Montague Love
Bert Lytell
Frank Mayo
Thomas Meighan
Owen Moore
Tom Moore
Antonio Moreno
Harry Myers
Eugene O'Brien
Charles Ray
William Russell
Joe Ryan
Milton Sills
Conway Tearle

FIVE-REEL COMEDY-DRAMA —FEMALE LEAD

May Allison
Billie Burke
June Caprice
Marguerite Clark
Viola Dana
Bebe Daniels
Dorothy Gish
Wanda Hawley
Justine Johnson
Mollie King
Doris May
Mary Miles Minter
Mary Pickford
Constance Talmadge

FIVE-REEL COMEDY-DRAMA —MALE LEAD

Roscoe Arbuckle
Douglas Fairbanks
Carter de Haven
Johnny Jones
Douglas MacLean
Tom Moore
Charles Ray
Wallace Reid
Bryant Washburn

FIVE-REEL COMEDY

Charlie Chaplin
Max Linder
Charles Murray
Kala Pasha
Ben Turpin

FIVE-REEL WESTERN

Art Acord
Harry Carey
Lester Cuneo
William Duncan
Jack Drum
Ray Gallagher
Neal Hart
Jack Hoxie
Tom Mix
Pete Morrison
Antonio Moreno
Will Rogers
Tom Santchi
Russell Simpson

THREE-REEL COMEDY

Harold Lloyd

TWO-REEL COMEDY —FEMALE LEAD

Vioria Daniel
Dorothy Devore
Louise Fazenda
Phyllis Haver
Irene Hunt
Pearl Shepard
Edna Shipman

TWO-REEL COMEDY —MALE LEAD

Jimmie Adamas
Alexander Alt
Jimmy Aubrey
Monty Banks
George Bunny
Charlie Chaplin
Chester Conklin
Clyde Cook
Bud Duncan
Neely Edwards
Harry Gribben
Lloyd Hamilton
Ham Hamilton
Buster Keaton
Jack Livingston
Harold Lloyd
Hank Mann
Harry McCoy
Lee Moran
Charles Murray
Kala Pasha
Larry Semon
Sid Smith
Ford Sterling
Harry Swett
Ben Turpin
Bobbie Vernon
Jack White
Leo White

TWO-REEL WESTERN —FEMALE LEAD

Josephine Hill
Helen Holmes
Fritzie Ridgway

TWO-REEL WESTERN —MALE LEAD

Art Acord
F. Braidwood
William Fairbanks
C. E. Hatton
J. B. Warner

ONE-REEL COMEDY

Ida Allen
Eddie Boland
Billy Fletcher
Gaylord Lloyd
Harry Mann
George Ovey
Snub Pollard
Rex Story

SERIAL

Ann Little
Ruth Roland
Antonio Moreno
Eddie Polo

SCENARIO MARKET

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The $30,000 Scenario Contest

(Continued from Page 6)

at the point where stage themes for adaptation are exhausted, the fiction shelves have been scanned and rescanned for plots . . ."

This from Samuel Goldwyn in The Daily News on the same day:

"No matter what scenario the judges select, it will be humming in Culver City a few weeks after the decision . . . I do not expect to hear the name of a famous author when the judges are told who has written the nameless manuscript they have selected as winner of the first prize. I believe that the winning stories of real life will come from the ranks of housewives, business men, laborers or stenographers."

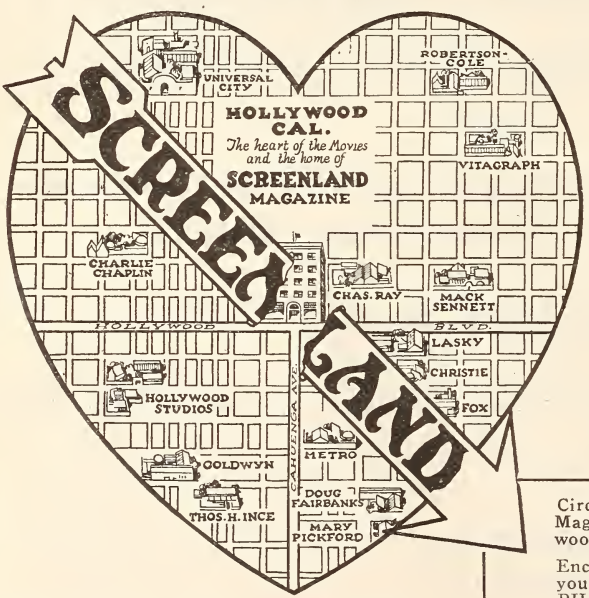
Mr. Goldwyn, in referring to the "nameless" manuscript, refers to the fact that the judges will receive the manuscripts from The Daily News minus the names of the authors. "This," says the News, "removes all possible favoritism and, coupled with the recognized honor of the judges, makes it doubly sure that each story will be judged on its merits alone."

THE PHOTODRAMATIST recommends that any of its readers who are especially interested in The Chicago Daily News National Scenario Contest subscribe to that newspaper, commencing with the issue of August 22nd, as there are to be further announcements, printed registration blanks and assignment forms, and a series of articles by D. W. Griffith, Rupert Hughes and others which should prove pleasurable and instructive reading.

Also, THE PHOTODRAMATIST requests that any of its readers who chance to enter this contest should by all means make and preserve carbon copies of the manuscripts they submit. The Daily News is not returning them and announces that they will not be responsible for lost manuscripts.

Furthermore, we advise anyone contemplating entering the contest to first secure copies of The Chicago Daily News for assignment forms and registration blanks, as it is absolutely necessary to register to be entered as a contestant.

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We are very anxious for you to know how wonderful it is for you to have SCREENLAND come blowing into your home once a month—bearing fresh breezes of California and all the news of authors and stars from the West Coast where the movies are made.

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Frances White Elijah, Chicago War Worker, whose photoplay, "The One Man Woman," won First Price of $2,500. Mrs. Elijah writes:

"You can understand how grateful I feel to Mr. Read for giving me an opportunity to succeed and how thankful I am to the Palmer institution for having given me a training which made the success possible."



A. Earl Kauffman, Secretary to the Mayor of York, Penna., whose photoplay, "The Leopard Lily," won Second Price of $1,500. Mr. Kauffman writes:

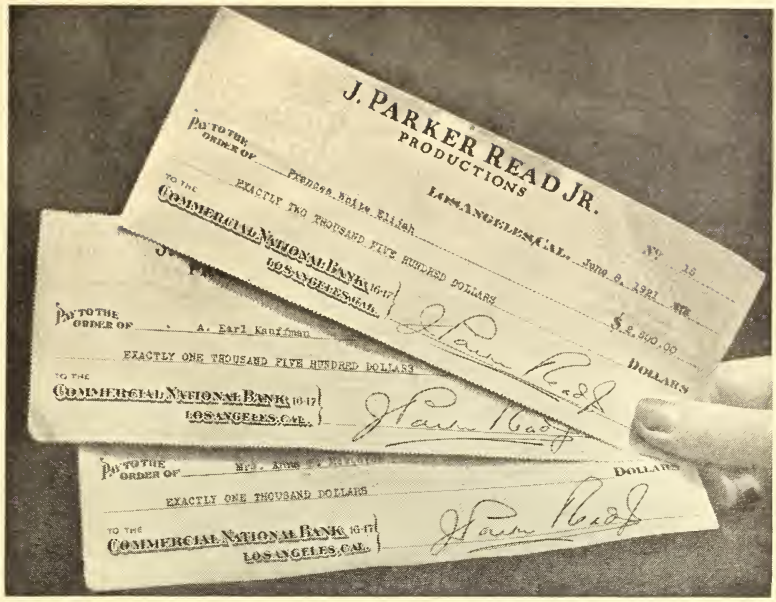
"I didn't win the $1,500 prize. The Palmer Plan won it. But I'm going to spend it."



Anna B. Mezquida, of San Francisco, short story writer and poet, whose photoplay, "The Charm Trader," won Third Prize of $1,000. Mrs. Mezquida writes:

"I should not have known how to go about preparing an acceptable scenario without the Palmer Plan to point the way. Screen technique is so different from that of the short story that they must be learned separately."

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I. W. Hellman Building, Los Angeles, California

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OCTOBER, 1921
Volume III. No. 5.

Official Organ of the Screen Writers' Guild
of the Authors' League of America

The PHOTODRAMATIST



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OCTOBER, 1921
Volume III. No. 5.

Official Organ of the Screen Writers' Guild
of the Authors' League of America

The PHOTODRAMATIST



A Call to Arms

By Thompson Buchanan



OF course the most vital thing in pictures today is this miserable censorship question. It affects the writers to a more exasperating extent than any other workers in the game. Inasmuch as the sort of persons who are willing to take jobs as censors belong necessarily to that most appalling of all classes—the mentally half-baked, half-educated—their malignant stupidity, their amazing mis-information, their parochial ideas harass and circumscribe the writer at almost every stroke of his pencil.

It is absurd that we should be under the clumsy thumb of these malevolent Pharisees. It is worse than absurd, it is unnecessary. The lack of fighting spirit shown by the motion picture industry as a whole is shameful. We have throughout acted on the defensive. We have conceded here and deprecated there and compromised elsewhere, we have stood around with our hats in our hands saying, "Oh, sir," and "Yes, sir," and "Please, sir," when what we should do is to stand up like resolute, old-fashioned he-Americans and fight back.

Whenever that happy time comes that the Motion Picture Industry develops a little of those two great essentials, back-bone and guts, we can be sure of finding back of us three very powerful elements in the community and those, strange to remark, are the three older branches of religion in this country from which all the other churches have sprouted. I refer to the Roman Catholic Church, the Jewish Church and the Protestant-Episcopal Church. I am not a Roman Catholic, but I cannot help putting in a word of respect for the dignified and intelligent attitude of the Roman Catholic clergy in America—none of this blue law agitation comes from them. The Jews, the oldest of all religious bodies of any importance in America, have long been noted for their broad and tolerant attitude as well as for their real and genuine love of art. Of all the peoples of the world, the Jews have as a race the highest dramatic gifts and the most generous appreciation of the beautiful. Also, centuries of persecution have taught them the evil that can be done in the name of religion and the beauty of minding one's own business. We will never get the blue law agitation from them. The third church, the Protestant-Episcopal Church, of which I happen to be a communicant, has come out in many states in favor of pictures and against censorship. It may also be noted in passing, that of these three more tolerant religious bodies, not a single teacher or pastor is at the present time in jail. This may seem like an absurd statement. Whoever heard of a religious teacher or a preacher being in jail. Nevertheless, although you may not have heard it, the records show that at the present time there are in the prisons of the United States more preachers and religious teachers than there are of all the writers, actors, directors, artists or any other body of men connected with the creative or interpretive side of the theatre or the motion picture business. And strange to relate, most of the preachers and teachers in prison are there for sex crimes, many of them of a

hideous and revolting nature. A state is now supporting one religious gentleman who beat his son to death with a strap because the boy could not recite The Lord's Prayer. Any Freudian expert will tell you that this sort of crime is always the result of a certain form of sex degeneracy. The same papers that recently blazoned pages on the alleged crime of a motion picture actor, carried a *small* story to the effect that a certain Reverend doctor in the State of Indiana had just been sentenced to serve a prison term for contributing to the delinquency of an eighteen-year-old girl, the crime being committed while the Reverend gentleman was conducting an Evangelical meeting to clean up the town and was living at the house of the girl's mother. There is another Reverend gentleman in jail in the South for murder and yet despite all these cases and many more I could quote, I would be the last to start an agitation to close the churches. If a writer or an actor is accused of a crime, the fact is blazoned from one end of the country to the other. If a minister or a religious teacher or a blue law agitator is convicted of a crime, the matter is recorded in a small paragraph in one corner of the paper. Now, news is important as regards the character of the people and the unusualness of the happening. This would seem to indicate that the commission of a crime by a writer or an actor or a director is such an unusual event as to merit the widest publicity, while in the case of a preacher or a religious teacher, well—draw your own conclusions.

Therefore, I say the thing to do is to fight back. As the other branches of the industry won't do it, it seems to be up to us. After all, we ought to be more able publicists than they. We ought to be able to express ourselves more forcibly, more lucidly, more effectively. Whenever the blue law union in any particular town raises its braying voice for censorship or other blue laws, fight it. Whenever a braying Jack-ass rises on its hind legs to utter stupidities concerning our work, come back at him. Show him up for the malignant meddler he is—make him prove his point or shut up.



Vision

So impressed is the management of the Rockett Film Corporation with the power of the motion picture as an agent of publicity that a plan is being formulated to submit to the industry throughout the world calling for cooperation to fight poverty, disease and insanity.

The Rockett idea, briefly stated, is to amalgamate the entire motion picture industry with every medium for the dissemination of knowledge and information in the world, drawing into the movement through numberless organizations of all descriptions—scientific, educational, welfare, industrial, civic, political, artistic, fraternal, ecclesiastic, etc., almost every individual in the world, fighting as one man to eradicate poverty, disease and insanity.

With this tremendous vision as an inspiration President Ray R. Rockett is preparing to feel out the sentiment of the motion picture world with regard to the idea and if sufficient encouragement be accorded he will seek ways and means to arrange a world's congress to discuss the subject.

The Guild Forum

A monthly department devoted to the interests of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America, the official organization of recognized photodramatists and studio staff writers.

By Alfred Hustwick

The Screen Writers' Guild

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Frank E. Woods, President.
June Mathis, Vice-President.
Eugene Presbrey, Treasurer and Executive Secretary.
Dwight Cleveland, Recording Secretary.

Executive Committee

The officers and Thompson Buchanan, Elmer Harris, A. S. LeVino, Jeanie MacPherson, Frederick Palmer, Elmer Rice, Rob Wagner.

Retrospect.

Time was, and not so very long ago, when the screen writer occupied a far from enviable position in the scheme of motion picture production. Almost every other branch of the industry had its organization, actively engaged in protecting its members from inequitable treatment. Director, actor, carpenter, electrician—these and others, in any dispute with an employer, had a court of appeal as a final resort, a court that possessed authority, in some degree at least, to pass upon the matter at issue, to reach a verdict and to throw the weight of its membership behind a demand for justice. The screen writer, perhaps the most important contributor to the motion picture, stood alone and apart, his claims to recognition falling generally upon deaf ears and the vital character of his work apparently, and quite often deliberately, minimized or totally ignored.

The fact that the fate of a new art and a giant industry was chiefly in his keeping helped him but little. Assertiveness, always an admirable substitute for intrinsic importance in any new business, advanced the interests of the other branches of picture-making to a point far beyond that attained by the more modest writer. The whole situation was simply a repetition of history—the artist, sculptor, literary man, peddling imagination for a dole, to enrich his exploiter and make famous his interpreter. The anomaly could only exist where imaginative gifts, the intangible assets of creative artists, sought alms from less conscientious and more successful talents devoted to the task of making ten dollars grow where only one had grown before. And, since there is an eternal fitness in evolutionary processes, it couldn't last forever.

To drop into maritime metaphor, one can liken the screen writer of two years ago to the old-time sailing vessels, of every size and build and rig, that traded in every land, carrying their cargoes of ideas into far waters, building an empire for the stay-at-homes to inherit and exploit. Some few there were that followed the established trade-routes and prospered. Others were of such importance that even the stay-at-homes valued their trade and gave them the protection of their fighting ships. But, for the most part, they were lonely voyagers and the fruit of their venturing was a meager freight. The ancient plan, "that he should hold who has the power, and he should take who can," governed the conduct of such strangers as spoke them. Their occasional signals of distress brought no answer from the haughty ships that passed them by, such help as they received came from their own class, from the more fortunate of their brothers. And there were times when piratical craft, ever hovering about, gleefully read their signals of distress as proof of their defenselessness and, with true buccaneering bravado, boarded them and stripped them to the last bale of merchandise.

Such was the plight of the screen writer up to a year and a half ago when someone—may his name be preserved in immortal tablets—suggested organization for offense and defense. The time was ripe, the response was immediate. No sooner did the Screen Writers' Guild, under the powerful patronage of the Authors' League, fling its pennant to the breeze than from the seven seas of the industry came hurrying craft, eager to ally themselves with the emancipating fleet. Three-deckers, with frowning guns, well able to defend them-

selves but willing to support a great principle, dropped anchor by the flagship. The staid merchant-ships of the big lines, the staff writers of established position, signalled allegiance to the cause. And last, but not least, came the fleet of roving traders, the adventurous explorers, the free-lances who had borne their slogan, "Screen Credit for the Screen Writer," mastheaded through many a hostile sea.

Many were absent from that great gathering but there was a fleet in being and a campaign in prospect.

Close-Up.

In a little over eighteen months the Screen Writers' Guild has become a power in the land. Its achievements need not be recited at length but, for the benefit of those tardy vessels just reporting from far countries and eager for news, a brief summary is obligatory.

The Guild has approximately 150 members and is adding to that number weekly. The rigid scrutiny to which all proposed members are subjected, while it guarantees the preservation of the organization as a purely screen-writers' body, makes the addition of members a slower process than many would imagine, but the result, a membership list thoroughly representative in every way, has justified the method. Membership in the Guild is, ipso facto, membership in the Authors' League of America and membership in the unique club established by the Guild, The Writers. The screen writer admitted to membership in the Guild receives the seal of recognition from the members of the craft and, as we shall see, this is no empty honor.

The objects of the Guild, to secure adequate recognition and equitable treatment for its members, have been attained to an extent that seems unbelievable in view of the fact that it has existed for little more than a year. Standard contracts, covering every phase of the screen writer's work, are now a subject of negotiation with the producers. The wonderful work of the Guild's grievance committee in adjusting every case presented to it by arbitration, and to the complete satisfaction of the producers, as well as the writers, has converted most of the bigger producers to the principle of adequate protection of both parties. A year ago the standard contract was a far distant goal. Today it seems very near.

Without going into details it is safe to say that the work of the Guild in the year and a few months it has been in existence has been crowned with wonderful success. The screen writer is no longer the tail of the dog. He has secured recognition and, more than that, he has gained a remarkable prestige. Practically all the Guild has striven for has been accomplished to some degree. The principles it stood and still stands for are recognized, not only by the producers but by other branches of the industry and, to some extent, by the public. It has grown from an idea to an accomplished fact—a strong organization of creative artists, animated by a desire for justice and the advancement of their art, free from the suspicion of ulterior motives and pledged to the principle of co-operation with all branches of the industry for its ultimate elevation to the highest possible plane. Much has been accomplished. Much more remains to be done.

Long Shot.

What lies before us? What prospect will reveal itself to our eager eyes when the height of the immediate goal is won and the land of promise unrolls itself before us? Will the screen writer then, as now, give most of his energy and ability to the task of transforming another's creation to the silver screen? Will he then, as now, divide his time between creating plays for his soul's satisfaction and the glory of his art—(with the financial reward, however large or necessary, subordinate to all other considerations)—and hack-writing for his daily bread? Will the Shakespeare of the screen, hailed as a master in all lands, recall the day when he received his invitation to join the Screen Writers' Guild?

It would be easy to propound such interrogations indefinitely—it might be interesting to hear them discussed. But prophecy is an individual guess and it is only a concensus of such guesswork that is worth recording. Whether the writer of this article is competent to report that concensus is itself a matter at which he can only guess, but, however little his vision of Tomorrow may coincide with your own, there can be no doubt of his sincerity. He admits it.

First of all, we imagine the future peopled with new beings. The motion picture, a highly developed art, has outstripped the printing press, the public rostrum, the daily paper. It is the greatest educational force, the universal channel of news presentation, the Esperanto of international understanding. Technically it has undergone immense changes, photography, lighting, laboratory work, projection are all far advanced beyond present standards. Wireless has been

utilized for the transmission of current events, an achievement made possible by revolutionary methods in photography.

And the screen drama? Fundamentally it has not changed but it *has* progressed. It has a different audience, an audience educated by the picture. Through his art the screen writer has taught that audience what cause should follow what effect; he has given it what the stage, with its limited appeal, could never give to it—dramatic perception. He has impressed it with his best taste in art, in literature. He has awakened its interest and stimulated its study of philosophy, science and the mechanics of civilization. Truly there is little new under the sun for it. Consequently it is an exacting audience, critical and unsparing. Of course it is still interested in seeing itself upon the screen, its hopes, fears, loves, hates, comedies and tragedies. But it demands subtlety where formerly it was satisfied with continuity. The old tricks no longer deceive it, only a master of the craft can hold it in suspense and give it the big thrill.

Screen writing is no longer the production of scripts under pressure. The author must keep, not abreast, but ahead of his audience. The imaginative standard must be higher, the workmanship better. And what of the reward? A greater pecuniary reward? Yes, that has naturally followed the advancement of the art, but more work and more time must be expended. The cubby-hole with its plain desk and battered typewriter, the efficiency expert attempting to accelerate uninspired production, the eternal grind that destroys the soul and ruins the imagination, these are no more. Even business—and the motion picture will only thrive by being a good business—even business has learned that mental, physical and creative activities must be treated separately. The drama is the keystone which supports the industry and the photodramatist alone can supply it. Today the fact is but dimly recognized in the counting-houses of the industry, but in our vision of Tomorrow we see the screen writer occupying a position similar to the stage dramatists of today, taking time to do his best, working amid surroundings which are conducive to quiet thought and the exercise of pure fancy. For the successful ones there will be wreaths as bright as any that have crowned the brows of literary men, dramatists, actors. The labor will be greater—going one's self better every time, competing with one's own past achievements, satisfying an audience that one has educated to a higher standard of critical appreciation. . . . .

Enough of prophecy. Let each reader complete or revise the picture of Tomorrow to his own liking. Whether it prove false or true, it is our present comfort and the stuff of which our dreams are made. The Screen Writers' Guild is the caravan which heads towards the Land of Promise.

If you have faith in your Art, and yourself—join the caravan!

Good Business.

A certain metropolitan daily in conjunction with a certain well-known producer announces a "contest" for scenario writers, both amateur and professional. No person except employees of the two concerns are barred, no limitation is placed upon the imagination of the writer. He may pick his own subject and treat it in his own way. That the judging will be square and aboveboard is assured by the character and standing of the judges. The first prize is $10,000, a comfortable sum indeed for an "original" photoplay. The object of the contest, stripped of the announcement verbiage, is to develop the potential amateur talent of the nation.

Perhaps so, but it is noteworthy that professionals are not barred and it is quite certain a good many professionals will strive for that first prize of ten thousand greenbacks. This being the case it is permissible to call their attention to some features of this contest which they might overlook in their anxiety to hook the big plum. All photoplays submitted must be accompanied by an assignment of copyright. Any photoplay that does not win a prize will be released to its author, the copyright assignment applying only in the case of the prize-winners. Now for some arithmetic.

The first prize is $10,000. There are ten second prizes of $1,000 each and 20 third prizes of $500 each. According to the newspaper itself "picture men expect a quantity of usable material to appear even in the lists of those that receive no prizes." This indicates that it is expected that the thirty-one prizes will all be won and that there will be good material even in some of the losing scripts. In other words the newspaper and the producer anticipate that they will pick up *thirty-one* good photoplays for a total price of *thirty thousand dollars,* an average of $967.74 per photoplay. This certainly looks like good business for the promoters of the contest.

But is it good business for the professional screen writer?

Short Subjects.

Contrary to expectations it is impossible to give, in this issue of the Photodramatist, the exact date of the formal opening of The Writers. Unforeseen delays in securing the furniture, much of which is being especially designed for the club, are responsible for the present inability to set a definite date. For these delays the furniture firms are solely responsible. Every effort is being made to hold the contractors to their latest promises which, if kept, should permit of the club being opened early in October.



The Last Arabian Night

From an hitherto unpublished manuscript freely translated by Earl Kauffman

It was the thousand and second night.

Impatiently the Sultan of all the Indies cast aside the after-dinner Camel he had petulantly lighted only a moment before. Picking up the ebony receiver of the house phone, he summoned the sultaness in a terrible voice. Scheherezade came in fear, trembling and dishabille.

"We would hear another of thy original plots," commanded the prince, settling himself in an attitude similar to that assumed by the cinema habitue after he has stumbled through the Stygian aisle, hurdled the knees of the corpulent woman and extricated himself from the umbrella and bundles of the slender gentleman.

Then she who had entertained her lord and master during a record run of one thousand and one night stands knew she was up against it. But she seated herself at his feet and began:

"Oh, sir, once upon a time there was a poor peasant maid—"

"Hold!" sharply interrupted the sultan. "Thy exposition has a familiar sound. Was there also, by any chance, a marquis in disguise and a villain from Punxsatawney?"

Her eyes betrayed her guilt.

"Old stuff!" commented her liege and waited.

"A vain, extravagant woman once—"

"Brought affairs in her household to such a pass by repeated assaults on her husband's check book that she was doomed evermore to wear gowns fashioned after patterns in the Woman's Home Companion. I know all about that one."

Sherry knew the end was near, but with a husky voice she took a fresh start. Even as you and I.

"In the Canadian woods—"

"Is God's country. It needs no Chamber of Commerce, for there we have the Royal Northwest Mounted and who has not heard its famous slogan, 'Get your man!'" finished the sultan dryly. It was the way he finished everything since the last batch of date brew spoiled in the cellar. He arose in a terrible rage.

"Come, come! Knowest not thou art infringing on the copyright of an 'eminent' author? We will give thee one more shot."

The distress of the sultaness was pitiful.

"Sir," she began falteringly, "I am sure thou hast not yet heard this—about a Follies actress who was, oh, so different from the rest—"

"Enough!" thundered the sultan, as he frantically rang for his grand vizier, father of the beautiful Scheherazade.

"Off with her head!" he commanded and turned and strode from the room without a backward glance. (Tartary papers please copy.)

History relates that the sultan thereupon left the palace alone, save for a retinue of fourteen private detectives, three senators, a congressman, two members of the Mohammedan board of censorship and his minister of public information and went to the Oriental Theater, where for the small sum of one sequin he was permitted to weep copious tears over the trials of a convent-bred maiden who returned to the world to find mamma the champion crap-shooter and top-spinner of Forty-Second Street.

The Eternal Esperanto

By Rex Ingram

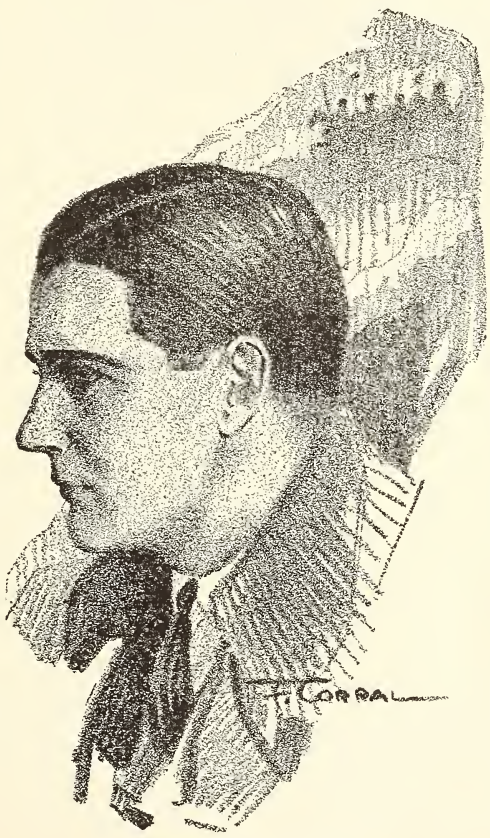
LOOKING back at those examples of art and literature upon which time has put the stamp of greatness, we find that one of their merits is, invariably. universality of appeal.

The Greeks, Michael Angelo, Shakespeare, Balzac and Beethoven speak to us through their various mediums of expression, as they spoke to the people of their day and age—and as readily we understand. Plato called the Deities "Spectators of all time, and all existence," and this is what those men have proven themselves to be, whose names are milestones in the history of Art.

Shakespeare wrote of America today just as he wrote of Hamlet's Denmark when he bewailed

"The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes."

Great art belongs to the ages, and to the Universe; in it, time and place are of secondary importance, for its message and its story are not of yesterday, today nor tomorrow, but of all time.



REX INGRAM
Producer of "The Four Horsemen" and "The Conquering Power"

Today those of us who make motion pictures are confronted by a problem which grows with every succeeding year. From all sides comments come in, to the effect that this story or this picture, while possessing all the elements that go to make an interesting film, is hampered by the fact of its being laid in Europe or Asia. And it is impressed upon us that America is uninterested in what concerns either of these continents.

Just so another story is so distinctly American, both in spirit and execution, that it has about as much chance of interesting a European as the want ads column in a middle-western newspaper. At present, the European market for films is negligible in comparison to our own, but it is growing all the time. The day must come when pictures can be made which will tell Broadway, Kalamazoo, and Paris the same story, and make them like it in pretty much the same way. Some day we are going to find the means whereby this universal appeal can be imparted to every picture. Most necessary to it is the big love interest and the human touch.

But further than this, through a symbolism which time will evolve, we will be able to disregard all reference to period and locale in the telling of our stories on the screen. Our characters can be made to live and breathe and their eyes to smile or weep just as effectively, without the audience being told in a title that this is Petrograd, Shanghai, or Catham Square, New York, and the local atmosphere of the places being slavishly followed in the play. Somewhere between the extreme realists and the ultra modernist we will find the happy medium of expression, a screen "Esperanto" so to speak.

In considering this long sought universal tongue, as applied to the screen, one gets

back to the scenario and its place in picture making. For the scenario is the foundation upon which every successful film production is constructed.

Allowing for the same difference in medium, practically the same laws apply to the production of a film play which has artistic merit, and to the making of a fine piece of sculpture or a masterly painting. The rough preliminary sketch made in a plastic medium or on paper by the sculptor for his proposed job, has its parallel in the synopsis made before the motion picture scenario is blocked out.

Before a scene is taken in a film play, provided ideal conditions exist in the studio, the scenario is completed, for without a well-constructed script, nine times out of ten the efforts of a director will fail to convince. He may have the human note, humor, pathos, fine characterizations and photography, well composed pictures and good lighting. But unless he convinces in the telling of his story, all these things stand on a foundation that wobbles.

The sculptured figure or group of figures first takes form in an armature or firmly constructed frame built according to the proportions of the job. This frame is composed of steel braces, wood, and lead piping, all wired together. Upon this structure the clay is then roughly massed.

Just as the moving picture director must have a thorough knowledge of scenario construction, the sculptor must be familiar with this part of his work, whether he does it himself or whether it is done for him. For if the armature is unskillfully put together it will not stand when the great weight of the clay it put upon it, and his efforts will be to no purpose. For even if portions are unhurt when the figure collapses, the mass will not hang together again.

The armature is the sculptor's scenario.

As the sculptor has to compose his grouping, to fit a certain space, on a pediment or monument, so the director must place his people within given lines, according to the distance they are from the camera, in order that the massing of figures, the distance, and the arrangement of lighting and shade will go to make up something that has pictorial value.

However, in this the film often presents a more complicated problem than either paint or clay. The compositions of painter and sculptor are studied out, and when finished remain as their creator left them, but the moving picture composition changes momentarily.

Often a fine bit of grouping that has taken the director a long time to compose will be changed to an unbalanced, disconnected mob scene through some alteration in dramatic action. This change sometimes may necessitate an entirely different arrangement of lights, and a different dressing of the set, although in most cases a different camera set-up or a change of foreground will be sufficient.

There is a tendency in film production when one is striving to make something of beauty, to sacrifice, or lose sight of the story theme. In moving pictures, this is particularly dangerous. For in sculpture and painting, although the finest examples of both arts have a theme—certainly a meaning—neither are linked so closely to literature as is the screen.

Something rarely sought for on the moving picture screen is form. As with clay and paint, form is one of the most vital adjuncts to the film. Take the closeup, for instance. Without knowledge of the construction and forms of the human head it is only by chance that the director can light it in such a way that the modeling is brought out. Lack of modeling will make a head thrown upon the screen appear to be flat and without character, and in doing so weaken the characterization of the player. It it modeling, obtained by judicious arrangement of light and shade, that enables us to give something of a stereoptic quality to the soft, mellow-toned closeups, which take the place of the human voice on the screen and help to make the audience intimate with the characters as if they had known and seen them constantly in everyday life.

Form and modeling help a characterization one hundred per cent. For instance, the most noticeable racial characteristic of the Chinese head is the high bony structure of the cheeks, a peculiarity that will be accentuated by the source of light coming from above at all times when photographing this particular character. The top light by throwing a shadow under the prominent cheek bones makes them more prominent than any high lighting a clever make-up artist may use in his efforts to gain the same effect.

Sculpture teaches us that color is deceptive, and the fact that from a life mask or a fine portrait bust of a friend we invariably learn more about the character of the original than we knew before proves that the theory has something of truth in

(Continued on Page 37)

The Dramatic Unities

By Paul Bern

THE close relationship between stage and screen is not to be denied, and some of the fundamental rules governing the making of good drama apply equally to the making of moving pictures. Principally this is true because of the use of *dramatic* material, whose appeal is universal. Other arts have their dramatic appeal, notably music. Who will say that the 1812 Overture by Tschaikowsky is not intensely dramatic—is not truly drama? It has its exposition, the development of its two principal themes, respectively the Marseillaise and the Russian Anthem; it has the terrific clash between these two, and virtue triumphs (as seen by its Russian composer). Of just such elements are plays made.



Paul Bern has worked in nearly all branches of motion picture production. He was recently appointed Editor in charge of the Goldwyn Scenario department. He has been respectively actor, publicity writer, scenario writer, superintendent of Goldwyn's New York laboratory, director, associate editor and now editor in charge. He co-directed Rex Beach's "The North Wind's Malice," directed "Edgar the Detective," one of Booth Tarkington's delightful comedies, and has just finished the directorial work on Alice Duer Miller's original story, "The Man With Two Mothers." Mr. Bern is a student and keen analyst of both the stage and the screen.

The ancient Greeks had certain rules of drama to which they stuck pretty closely. Basic was the rule of the three unities, Time, Place and Action. Action had to be concurrent, the place had to be a single location, and there were to be no time lapses. One of the principal reasons for these rules was the necessity of the moment, the vastness of the Greek theatre, and the impossibility of varying the background without a complete destruction of such little illusion as is obtainable by gentlemen walking on stilts and wearing masks distinguishable four blocks away.

Some centuries later Shakespeare saw the miracle plays of his time acted in backyards, by courtesy called courtyards, on wagons, etc. Here was a remarkable simplification of the question of stage setting, namely—none at all. The play actor merely hung up a sign to designate his location. How easy then for Mr. Shakespeare to see that a sign will as easily designate one location as another. So what does Mr. Shakespeare do but shift his location from a bedroom to a balcony, from a street to a castle hall, from a field to the interior of a tent, from Phillipi to Rome, not once, but forty times in the course of a play. This necessitates certain lapses of time, but if the imagination can spring from hovel to palace by the aid of the printed letter, so also can it hurdle time. Shakespeare, therefore, disregarded the unities entirely, and only stopped where he had to for the sake of the limitations that confronted him.

The influence of Shakespeare was such that for centuries the play whose action leaped back and forth innumerable times was accepted as technically correct. Moliere even changed his scene every time a new character came on, somehow equivalent to the change of cam-

era angle which the screen finds necessary when fewer or more persons are concerned in a scene.

When we made pictures ten years and more ago, the first thing we, and our elder brothers, discovered, the thing which thrilled beyond all else, was that here was a stepsister to the drama which allowed all rules to be discarded. By merely pasting little pieces of film together, we can jump from Tia Juana to Kansas City (oh, deadly comparison), from wealth to poverty, from continent to continent, from year to year, without any physical stop of the sweep of the story. Here was a great unloosing of the shackles of dramatic convention, and the industry promptly started to unshackle. And for some years we made pictures that jumped action, time and place, at will, and rejoiced in the jumping.

But today we have stopped playing with film. We're trying to construct something of permanence, of value, of artistry. So we are binding ourselves with restrictions, for art thrives best under restrictions. Almost anything does. It is only complete license that commits suicide.

So we have set a restriction on ourselves. And we have dug down several thousand years for the first law. It is the law of the unities—the unities of time, place and action. Those of us who study the subject realize that the best picture to be made is one which will develop its story smoothly, without halting, by means of fades or titles to indicate the lapse of time, which will keep its locations fairly close together, and will knit its action into a single developed dramatic episode. I dare say every reader in the offices of the great motion picture producing companies avoids the episodic tale, and searches untiringly for stories that do not jump, but are confined and close knit. All hail the unities! They have come back, resurrected by the Motion Pictures. Oh, William Winter, where is thy sting?



Persistent Mr. Neilan

A proposal by Marshall Neilan to request each of the prominent Los Angeles producers to make a two-reel anti-censorship film to be given exhibitors throughout the country free of charge, was read before the assembled exhibitors at the Minneapolis convention and received with great enthusiasm.

Mr. Neilan's plan is to make and distribute anti-censorship pictures along the same lines as the two-reelers made during the war to excite patriotism and bond buying. These pictures are to be made and distributed to exhibitors in all parts of the country to give them another weapon to fight blue laws through the powerful medium they have at their command and which to date has not been used in the fight for their rights—the screen.

The convention applauded the fact that Neilan has already started work on the first anti-censorship film to be given to the exhibitors.

Action on Neilan's proposal will be taken by the exhibitors immediately, according to a telegram received by the producer.



The Crime of the Screen

By Gertrude Nelson Andrews

WHAT really is "Big Stuff"? What is this fetish of the studios, to obtain which the producer is always taking the gamble? Is it the thing that costs the most money? Many seem to think so. And one will spend thousands on a spectacular train wreck, or explosion, or fire scene, or mobs of people, or for something ultra in the way of a fight, or a cabaret, or a sex thrill, and congratulate himself that he is making big stuff. Then he releases and watches the box office. But the big, stupid theatre-going public does not get his same appreciation of his production. It fails to thrill. And the thrill is the cocktail that satisfies the box office thirst.

Then some producer will put over a "Miracle Man," or a "Humoresque," or an "Over the Hill," and the box office goes on a spree. Why? What drawing power is in these plays which is not in the others which cost as much or more money? The answer is really very simple. It is the *true* thing which induces the thrill — the thing which universal experience recognizes as true — and not the spectacular, theatric false thing. The great social stomach will stand just about so many doses of the unnutritious theatric. Then it grows nauseated and refuses to attempt to digest any more. This revulsion always comes. It never fails. It is the revulsion against the theatric which today is stirring all of the trouble in the world's vitals. In this great war mankind has been fed up on theatrics. He is sick to death of it all, and is struggling to find some antidote of truth.

The same situation, in a smaller way, prevails in the film drama. The public is sick of the jazz effort to turn the spectacular into cash. It wants the true thing. The crime of the screen is not that it depicts the immoralities—for that is life — but that it does not depict with *truth.*



Gertrude Nelson Andrews recently sold an original photoplay to Thomas H. Ince which that master producer has declared a masterpiece of screen writing. His praise is amply substantiated in the fact that he paid a larger amount for this story than for any other "original" ever purchased from an outside writer. Mrs. Andrews' article is like herself—alight with fine enthusiasm and decidedly encouraging, to those seeking intrinsic values. She says: "The crime of the screen is not that it depicts the immoralities—for that is life—but that it does not depict with truth."

But the true thing is hidden, not obvious. That is why it is not always found by the author, the director, the producer, *or*—the cutter. These must all be psychologists if they are to find the true. For it lives hidden in the souls of men. It is motive, impulse, love, hate, jealousy, greed, all of those forces which mould human nature —which make certain persons, under certain frictional circumstances, do and say the things which are true to their individual characters. And when this true life interpretation can induce both smiles and tears, and when it offers something of ethical inspiration, then big stuff has been produced.

A Babylonian pageant that costs thousands of dollars and months of labor to build may leave an audience cold and unresponsive, and be forgotten before the the-

atre's front door has been reached. But who can ever forget the child who throws away his crutches and wobbles on his little crippled legs up the hill to the Miracle Man? It is the flame of faith suddenly enkindled in the child's soul that stirs the responsive thrill in the auditor! Every one who watches the scene—be he wise or ignorant, of high degree or lowly—knows and feels its true appeal. For he himself has felt the same need of faith to heal some human weakness.

So the great costly train-wreck, or fire, or explosion, may leave an audience cold. But a heroic rescue from the accident—some act of human service which is simple and true—stirs the thrill. All big moments are simple. All big art is simple. The failure comes from trying to do the big thing *big*.

Anna Moore's truly big life moment—the moment of universal thrill response—is the one in which she herself baptises her little dying illegitimate baby. Without that impulse of human need flashed out of Anna's tortured soul and made into action, her chilly pilgrimage on the ice-blocks through two reels of film would lose its value. The audience is interested in the *character* of Anna. It has felt and sympathized with her agony of spirit, and wants to see her saved. Had Anna abused and neglected her baby, this same thrill of desire in her audience could not be felt.

So it is the understanding of psychology—the digging down into the souls of men to find the hidden true—that is now the great need in the film drama. A photoplay production may be made by a wizard builder of continuity, the most expert technical director, and a magician cameraman, but if the psychology is wrong——! Well, the result is a Frankenstein of bulk and being, wearing clothes, but lacking both soul and understanding.

It takes time and thought to do the true thing. But if the author and continuity writer could take more time to do their part of the work right, much would be saved in the present waste of photoplay production.

Then there are two words which have interfered with the making of big stuff—highbrow and hokum. Producers have shied, afraid, of highbrow, believing that it had a graveyard smell. So it has. But hokum—a rather popular word—has the same sort of smell. For both are untrue to life. Real life understanding never takes the attitude of highbrow, and all sentiment is not hokum. To picture life *true* one never can feel himself above and apart from it. He must live down close to it—feel with it, work with it, play with it, laugh and cry with it, and believe in and love it.



The Slum

By Marion F. Lanphier

The gloom of a wet grey night,
The blur of a gas-lamp light;
The hulk of a sordid shack,
The glint of a street car rack;
The roar of a train somewhere,
The acrid smell of the air;
The sudden white of a child's pinched face,—
Men's grotesque shadows of life!



IMMORTALITY: Mary Pickford smiling at an audience in A. D. 2000; Caruso singing the Broken Heart aria from "Pagliacci" in 1922.



MISCONCEPTIONS: The business man believes artists to be dreamers who don't pay their bills; the artist believes business men to be maniacs chasing bubbles on the brink of a precipice.

This Side of Nirvana

By Ted LeBerthon

Attention

No screen writer can afford to forego a thorough reading of Alfred Hustwick's significant resumé and predictions, commencing on page 7. Any eligible screen writer—one who has written and had screened one original, adaptation or continuity—who does not apply for membership in the Screen Writers' Guild after reading Mr. Hustwick's article is lacking in sound business judgment—and imagination!

Some Observations

Ever and anon I receive letters from students of screen writing, in which it is assumed that I am as capable as Solomon of solving all vexatious problems. Several lobsters have indited banal missives in which they deplored their lack of ease and leisure, and asked me if there was not some way by which they could attain a relative economic security while writing their masterpieces. Still others write that they have inside information regarding eternal laws, that "they're in their right places" and that it was selfishness which prompted them to wish to express themselves instead of devoting their energies to family duties—therefore *they* have quit studying.

Some of my worthy correspondents actually divulge the discovery of harmony—yes, they're at peace after turbulent days and hours of struggling with instruction books and ideas! Some speak of successfully resisting the temptation to write; others make their *sacrifice* for the sake of the children's future. The dominant note, however, of most of these letters is a pitiful questioning, a mere wisp of doubt after sounding the depths of resignation.

To those who wish more security, it can easily be proven that the great artists have all thriven on insecurity; that too much ease is not conducive to strong, vital, creative efforts. It was Emerson who said: "A man never rises so high as when he knows not whither he is going."

To the self-conceded unselfish ones it might be said: *Give* when you've something to *give;* don't try to give of your vast emptiness—do a lot of *getting* first. Then some day you'll *give* unconsciously, out of your overflowing abundance.

Any coward can resist temptation! The free, unshackled spirit roams everywhere, is not afraid of Life and therefore yields to temptation—to enrich the soul and add to the beauty of expression.

Why sacrifice for children? Why stint and slave that they may live in dangerous ease. Why rob them of the opportunity to sacrifice, if sacrifice be such a high virtue? Why spoil their chances for *development through struggle?*

Many of our profoundest thinkers have questioned the intrinsic value of a university education, but the man who desires to give his children a university education may be far more able to do so through the sale of scenarios than through the sale of groceries or hardware, or bonds.

Why this ridiculous love of the unconditioned—of harmony? Why not "hold all lovely things more dear because they move in fugitive battalions manifold?" Why the evasion of struggle, of life dynamic?

Revolt, not quiescence, brings about a hardier, richer, finer art expression. Here in America, our smug serenity has resulted in much slovenliness of spirit—the spirit that produces rag-time! Contrast this with Russian art—in music, dancing, literature, the stage. But Russia has suffered, and revolted!

A woman recently wrote me that her social obligations interfered with her efforts at photoplay writing. She said she couldn't offend numerous friends who visited her frequently.

And why this resigned hospitality to bone-heads? Is there any iron in the soul of one who can't conserve herself, who can't be true to the higher aims of her spirit—of a spirit which would thrive far more in solitude than with a lot of braying society gals.

Less hospitality, less to eat and drink—more undisturbed moments, punctually and diligently observed, for purposes of study and creation!

Forego self-derision and ban from your presence those human swine who glory in deriding all effort at expression beyond that which solely aims at the productions of dollars. Throttle such asinine snickerers!

Starve your body rather than your soul; weary your body rather than your spirit.

As life at best is a gamble, go astray in a fine, magnificent fashion—rather than stagnate. Don't *resign* to anything.

Question all values and embark on the infinite ocean of romance and adventure; do not be guilty of the unpardonable sin of omission: the failure to develop latent forces.

The motion picture is direly in need today of new dreams, new viewpoints, lest it grow hopelessly formal and stale. "Eminent" authors and playwrights have failed to revivify the photoplay, having nothing fresh or new to bring to it.

The motion picture needs those untrammeled by tradition and popularity, unknowns who are striving for new values—whose futures are not behind them!

"Take no thought for the morrow." This doctrine, professed by millions, is seldom practiced, often doubted, and subconsciously repudiated—but these are the first and last words of creation, fixed, eternal.

Life may soon be over; cast doubt to the four winds—study and write while you can; beautify and vitalize *your* fragment of time.

Let's hear less often from lackadaisical, resigned ones who pray for the right to breathe; who are so fettered to their masters that they *can't find time to write photoplays.*

Prosperity

Practically every studio in Southern California is now running full blast, and many new studios are in course of construction. Goldwyn, Famous Players-Lasky, Ince, Universal and Fox all report tremendous activity—and all are feeling keenly the need of stories.

That the picture panic period is over is a certainty. Payrolls in Los Angeles are already increasing. Outside of the big, representative concerns above mentioned, and not inclusive of the new giant First National-Associated Producers combine, the independent groups will spend conservatively $10,000,000 in Los Angeles during 1922. At present not a single studio is idle and there have been more inquiries for studio space at the renting studios during the past two weeks than there were all summer.

The Titans

The motion picture industry was stirred to its depths by the unlooked for announcement of the most gigantic merger in years, that of First National Pictures, Inc., with the Associated Producers. Just realize what the union of these Collosi means! In retrospect, one must profoundly bow to the daring imagination of J. D. Williams and Thomas H. Ince.

The financial integrity and solid progress of the following picture makers is assured through this sweeping move:

Charles Chaplin, Thomas H. Ince, Mack Sennett, Norma Talmadge, Charles Ray, Katherine MacDonald, J. L. Frothingham, Pola Negri, Mary Pickford, Jack Pickford, D. W. Griffith, Marshall Neilan, Buster Keaton, Anita Stewart, Allen Holubar, R. A. Walsh, Oliver Morosco, King Vidor, Constance Talmadge, Hobart Bosworth, Florence Vidor, Douglas MacLean, Mabel Normand, Ben Turpin, Whitman Bennett, Lionel Barrymore, John M. Stahl, Allan Dwan, Jackie Coogan, James Oliver Curwood, Richard Barthelmess, Dorothy Phillips, Harry Raven, Carter de Haven, Sidney Franklin, Annette Kellerman, Louis B. Mayer, Joseph M. Schenck, Marguerite Clark, Wesley Barry, H. O. Davis, Roland West, Jewel Carmen, Mildred Harris, Fontaine Fox, Henry Lehrman, David Hartford, the Hepworth Company of England, and the Australian Photoplays Company—in all forty-nine units.

In Baltimore

Certain individuals have recently endeavored to prove that while motion picture theatre attendance had remained at a high ebb in Los Angeles, this was a phenomenon due to an intense local interest, i. e., the presence of the photoplay colony. The gloom diffusers maintained that this happy condition did not exist elsewhere, particularly on the Atlantic seaboard.

In the Baltimore Sun for Friday, July 29th, appears the following, included in a wealth of statistics: "Baltimoreans spent almost $22,000,000 on the movies during the year ended June 30, according to war tax figures in the office of the Collector of Internal Revenue. The actual taxes paid in that period on admissions to motion-picture theatres totaled $2,196,071.12 . . . . if 25 cents is considered an average admission price, the figures indicate that nearly 300,000 persons, or close to half the population of Baltimore, go to the 'movies' every day . . . . the motion picture business prospered even more than it did during the previous year."

Film Men and Bankers

It is highly significant that the Bankers' Convention opens October 2 in Los Angeles. Of about 33,000 banking institutions in the United States, approximately 30,000 will be represented. Motion picture interests will entertain the visiting delegates—

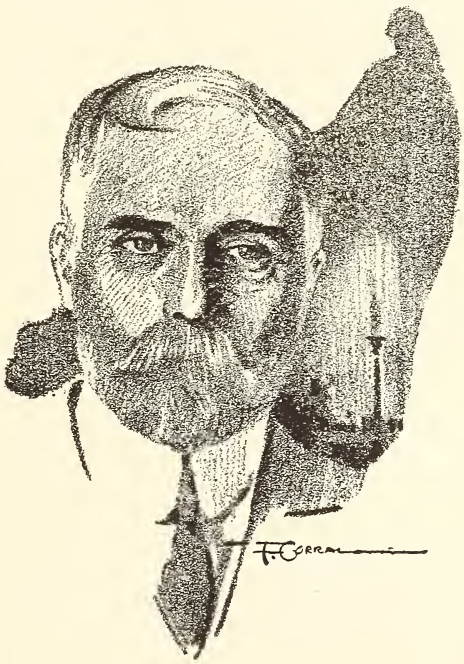
(Continued on Page 38)

The Romantic Historical Film

By Sir Gilbert Parker

I AM convinced that the day of the historical film is now here and that presently we shall see such films received by the public with enthusiastic applause. "The Mark of Zorro" was a romantic historical film, and its success was great, but the big picture producers said: "It is no test, for the Mexican costume is the same today as it was a hundred years ago; besides it has no knee-breeches and is free from the sense of the artificial that the knee-breeches and the wigs give, and is familiar to the public." Then came "Passion" and "Deception." It was said at first that our great producers had been won over, and they were, but these films failed in all the small places, and the big producers grew cold again on historical costume films. They had always said that the big cities paid for the cost of production, and that the small places gave the profit. Now has come "The Three Musketeers," and it is a prodigious success—k n e e - breeches and wigs and all.

I am convinced that the reason "Passion" and "Deception" were not financial successes was due to other causes than the non-response of the small places. Naturally the exhibitors who had long believed that the costume film was dangerous to financial success required to be convinced; but the salesmen of the film companies, who were themselves not convinced, had little historical sense and were not able to press their historical films with sufficient force. I am sure that in a large part this is the cause, and not the unwillingness of the public in the small places—who do not differ so essentially from the public in the big places. If it is said that the public likes to see things they recognize as familiar on the screen-stage, my reply is that some of the most successful productions of the most popular film producers are what is called "hokum"—the things that no one recognizes in daily life, that are "fake" and f a n c y — fallacious; but shadowy, picturesque and unusual.



SIR GILBERT PARKER

The noted English novelist, recently on the Famous Players-Lasky scenario staff, says: "If it is said that the public likes to see things they recognize as familiar on the screen-stage, my reply is that some of the most successful productions of the most popular film producers are what is called 'hokum'—the things that no one recognizes."

The day of the costume film is now at hand. If you have a film of Egypt or India, it must be a costume film, for there the costume has not changed in hundreds of years; if you have a picture of the Highlands or Switzerland, or Greece, or Italy, or Spain, or most countries of Europe, you must have costumes that are not in daily life familiar to the ordinary eye. Now the Highlander carries a dirk in his stocking, and wears neither swords, wig, or knee-breeches!

The truth is, there is as much "hokum"

in argument as in the films, and it will presently pass that there will come to the mind of the general public the love of costume films; as completely as the love of the films of every day life that they are supposed to want in the film theatres. It is the public that certifies the success of the films, and in the end the public is always right. It may be led away momentarily, it may have mistaken views temporarily, but it decides right finally. Give it its chance, do not fear it, and all will be well.

I do not think that costume films will ever equal in number the ordinary every day life films, but the percentage will no doubt be as sixty to forty, and that will be sufficient. If the vast success of "The Three Musketeers" opens the way to this it will have done well, and to Douglas Fairbanks as a producer will be given the palm of success. The film, "Joan the Woman," by Cecil DeMille, was a great achievement in costume films, but it was censored by the Roman Catholic Church into a financial failure; that no doubt, is one of the reasons why Mr. Zukor and Mr. Lasky have hesitated to do more costume films.

Think of the field the historical film opens up. Though the films are expensive, the returns will be assured when the public at large will demand them. I feel, however, that the greatest costume films will come from England, France, Italy, and other countries of Europe where tradition and history and the sense of ritual is so much alive. Yet Sessue Hayakawa has made great success of Japanese and Chinese films —costume, too. Truth is, if faith prevails and the public demands—and they will demand—success is beyond question.



Ballade of Forgotten Favorites

By John Northern Hilliard

Where are the actors that our mothers knew—
Those idols of the "dear dead long ago,"
Knight-errants of bouquet and billet-doux,
Who made them laugh or thrilled them with sweet woe?
Raymond, who set so many hearts aglow,
Lewis, and Billy Florence—where are they?—
And Booth and all the old-time array
Of brocade stars that in the limelight shone,
Gallants in fustian of the matinee? . . . .
So soon are we forgot when we are gone.

Folk used to flock to witness Barrett woo,
In hose and doublet clad, as Romeo;
They watched Macready rant a drama through,
Reveled in Forest's braggadocio;
McCullough made their ready teardrops flow,
Or blanched their cheek with mimic fight or fray.
No more does buskined tragedy hold sway.
Momus is dead. The silent drama's "on."
The old-time gods are only shadows gray. . . . .
So soon are we forgot when we are gone.

Today the movie heroes have the "cue,"
Their photographs adorn our walls, I trow.
Today, the screen; tomorrow, something new?
From flame to flame we flit without a throe.
Tomorrow we may find young Keaton "slow,"
The Pickford faded and Bill Hart passee,
Doug of the dental smile no longer gay,
And Chaplin, once the silver sheet's sad Don,
One with the mirthless ghosts of yesterday. . . . .
So soon are we forgot when we are gone.

L'envoi

Prince, do not sigh for mummers passed away,
They won their plaudits and they had their May.
Rather take heed of those who—ah!—anon
Shall pass (Hail and farewell!), poor ghosts who'll say:
"So soon are we forgot when we are gone."

Ambition versus Obsession

By Olga Printzlau

THERE is no denying that the motion picture screen is the momentarily popular target for the shots of human ambition, and this ambition to write is only the outcome of the creative instinct within each human heart. Most likely, when the novelty of the screen wears away, a great many of our aspiring authors will turn to the next discovery, with the same grim determination to elevate the new art which possessed Martha and Eliza of a century ago, when their lives were dominated by a mad passion for embroidering tapestries, waxing roses and outdoing each other on the spinnet.



Olga Printzlau, chief scenarist for William de Mille, says: "We are composed of three classes: writers, would-be writers, and can-be writers." She also says many other things in this article which will not be forgotten—by those who are wise and sincere.

Let us say we are composed of three classes — "writers," "would-be writers" and "can-be writers." The first mentioned species may be found, captured, contracted or paroled, by any well-established literary or dramatic institution.

The second class, which provides immediate interest: This species may be found in any walk of life, but is generally composed of the feminine sex. Every night when John comes home, she will have "plots" and "ideas" prepared, and will talk these to the dear man until the meat is cold and the gravy like a frozen lake in the pan. She is not the same loving, wifely little comrade she used to be, but just a talking machine, a dreaming whirligig—always in a trance. When she is making up the beds, visions of wild cowboys race madly over the counterpane in pursuit of the Indians who have captured the beautiful maiden! When she darns John's socks, she visualizes herself as the "poor working-girl," and eventually drops the work to write down these ambitious plots. She does not realize that all this is only a reflex of what she has seen upon some past screen—a glamor, a fascination, a mesmeric obsession which has come over her and is driving her, body and soul, into a state of mental confusion and false ambition.

"But how do you know I *can't* write?" she asks. "Why didn't she write before she heard of the screen?" might be a question to ask her. "I—I didn't think of it then." "And yet, there were books, the stage—" you remind her. "Oh, but they're too complex, too difficult to write for! The book requires literary ability, the stage requires technic and experience; but the screen—why it's awfully easy! Just a lot of exciting action, a love-story, a happy ending, and there you are! And, besides, I can stay at home—it's pleasant work and very simple."

That, in a nutshell, is the philosophy of the "would-be."

It requires the same amount of native intelligence, God-given talent and inspiration to write for the screen as is necessary to produce a poem, metrically correct—the same amount of dramatic instinct which enables a playwriter to create characters that move, live and speak truthfully.

Dear "would-be," wake up and get a little

respect for the screen! It is a thing of dignity, for today—the greatest literary and dramatic minds are turning to the screen, as artists to a blank canvas on which they can portray their greatest works. *They* have come to realize the screen's unlimited scope, with reverence; and yet, you make your approach with a smile of contempt! No wonder your scenario came back last week! What you truly *feel* shows through your work. What you really *are* shows through what you write. For you, I can only say—leave this type of creating alone, and properly tend your garden, your husband and your babies!

But the "can-be" species: His is the wonderful opportunity. He is kin to the "writer" in instinct. He knows that because a certain tragedy happened in his home-town, and which in that small community caused a great deal of excitement, that this situation is not necessarily dramatic. He does not immediately sit down and write out the tragedy, just as it took place, and send it "special delivery" to the nearest picture editor, with a request that he would like the check by return mail. No,—he realizes that while the tragedy or situation may be *sensational,* it is not necessarily dramatic; so he sets to work painstakingly to evolve this situation and construct it along dramatic lines. For, in the green forest, a builder may visualize a mansion; but, surely, to a casual onlooker, a tree is a tree, although with careful manipulation it may be turned into a house.

"Can-be" knows that writing for the screen is not merely putting together a series of tableaux—that it is more like stringing graduated pearls. They must be arranged according to their sizes, and one misplaced pearl will mar the symmetrical beauty of the whole. He knows, too, that the string which holds the pearls may be likened to the Theme—the vital, inner force which holds the whole creation together. If it is a frail string, it will break and the pearls will scatter. He matches his pearls of thought into a perfect continuity, allowing not one irregularity to mar his work. His greatest care, at all times, is to be sure that the string on which his pearls are strung—the theme of his play—runs through each pearl. He would never string priceless pearls on number fifty cotton, or even on number thirty, which is a bit stronger. He is sure that at all times his thread conforms in unity of strength and value to the value of his pearls, whether they be genuine pearls or glass beads. He is sure, whether his theme is worthy of lavish or simple treatment, for, if he is a sincere craftsman, he is economical, and realizes the folly of expending unnecessary waste upon situations which might otherwise be handled with simplicity.

He knows that his art, too, may be likened unto a mosaic, and every piece laid carefully to form a perfect pattern; that it requires perfect patience, dexterity and vision; that he must have the completed picture in mind before he can put together this picture puzzle.

If he is at all musical, he knows that his art is like the art of a symphony—every instrument working together in harmony. His subtitles, he knows, are like cadenzas—a single exquisite melody playing its part alone at intervals, then blending with the unified orchestration again.

There are many symbols, but, to the real writer, his art is sacred, first, last and always. Into it he puts his best—and perhaps his worst—but, at least, his sincerest and truest self. And for those who understand this, the screen offers golden opportunities. It is a wonderful window through which the world may look upon beautiful things—those visions which absolute sincerity and true purpose may bring to view.



The Censor

By J. R. McCarthy

The censor shook his ghastly head,
"This play is very lewd!
You cannot show it here," he said;
"That lady's heart is nude!"

"She shows such things as none may dare
To show upon the screen;
Her heart is naked, and the bare
Shade of her soul is seen!"

The Invalidity of Opinion

By Frederick Palmer

DURING the first week in August the daily press carried quotations from an interview with Bernard Shaw in which the dynamic Redbeard stated that audiences are tired of photoplays dealing with the West of the United States, cowboys, and the like.

The following day those same dailies printed an authentic news report of the purchase by Samuelson, Ltd., an English organization engaged in the production and distribution of motion pictures, of five stories by Jackson Gregory, a writer of Western tales. The report went on to say that "Western pictures are having a tremendous vogue in England." Coming to my notice within twenty-four hours these two brief newspaper articles impressed me with the difference between personal opinion and undeniable fact, and with the futility of giving more than passing heed to what any one person or group of persons thinks about the trend of public taste.

Take No Heed

of what any eminent authority writes concerning what is or is not wanted on the screen," says Frederick Palmer;; "the opinion of your neighborhood barber means as much as the opinion of Bernard Shaw."

After the first performance of "Way Down East" in Los Angeles, I was enjoying a bed-time cigar in the lounge of a Los Angeles club. One by one a group of friends and acquaintances strolled in, and it happened that all had just come from the theatre where the Griffith picture was being shown. Quite naturally the conversation immediately turned to the screen drama that we had just witnessed. Without exception the verdict was negative. It was a case of "thumbs down" all around the circle. I adhered to my policy of listening; I attach little value to my personal likes and dislikes — they interest me to some slight degree, but in view of the fact that there are approximately one hundred and ten million other people busy deciding upon the artistic qualities of current screen productions, I feel that my vote would unnecessarily prolong the count of ballots to no particularly good or useful end. I am never deaf nor blind, but on many occasions I prefer to be dumb.

Not long after, I was at dinner at a private home, and the talk drifted to "Way Down East." The majority thought it a very fine picture. The average of intelligence, culture, and the social stratum were about the same as of the men at the club. It is the same with every picture—some vote "yes" and some vote "no."

Every day I receive letters which, summed up or boiled down, tell me that "this country" is tired of certain kinds of photoplays because "I and all my friends just can't stand them." In not a few cases I have written to such correspondents at some length, explaining that exhibitors all over the United States — all over North America —all over the world, are constantly reporting the likes and dislikes of their local audiences and the producers are minutely examining these reports and are striving to please the great majority of theatre goers. Several times I have been somewhat stunned to receive replies stating, in effect ,that the calculations of the exhibitors and producers are all wrong, and volunteering advice based on the individual opinion of the letter-writer. Attempting to deal with such narrow visioned people has left me helpless and speechless. Just another occasion when one may as well remain dumb. Words are unavailing.

I sat in a theatre less than a week ago

and witnessed a picture that seemed to me to be so bad that I was inclined to be angry with myself, the producer, the exhibitor, and all others concerned with the thing; wasting an evening is mildly tragic when there are only seven in one week and so many pictures to see. I started counting the exit lights and multiplying them by the number of bald heads in the orchestra, just as a diversion. In looking about me in the half light of the theatre, I beheld that many were in tears ,and all seemed to be held spellbound. I again turned my attention to the screen. As the action progressed, the play seemed to get worse and worse. Yet when the end came and I passed into the street with the rest of the throng, I heard nothing but the most favorable comments. It was a "wonderful picture," "well acted," "strong drama," et cetera, ad infinitum, world without end, amen. As I sought my lodgings I pondered. I was chastened. I realized that, while I had not liked the picture, my opinion was not worth a counterfeit penny as against what apparently was the practically unanimous opinion of the many normal men and women who attended the same performance.

Because Bernard Shaw and his friends do not like Western pictures does not imply that millions of others do not. If I am distressed and petulant over a wasted evening, and the rest of the audience is elated, who is looney? I am, my friends! Therefore, if I break into print with a statement that that particular kind of picture is "not wanted," my opinion is valueless and should be suppressed. That is my reason for being dumb, often and often.

Moral: Do not become perturbed every time you read an article, signed by some "eminent authority," concerning what is wanted or not wanted on the screen. Bear in mind that audiences are made up of grocers' wives, Superior Court judges, mattress makers, church janitors, college professors, shop lifters, school teachers, stable boys, grave diggers, brides, maiden ladies, mothers-in-law, reformers, burglars, stamp collectors, milliners, dilettantes, prize fighters, kosher market-keepers—the entire population except Dr. Crafts and Joe Martin. It is their money, slipping through box-office windows day after day, that keeps the cameras shooting and the typewriters of photodramatists clicking. The opinion of your neighborhood barber means just as much as the opinion of Bernard Shaw, possibly more.



The Great Moment

By A. B. Leigh

How widely critics differ
And strange things think and say;
Take this for an example
About a photoplay:
One critic says it's really great,
Astounding and all that;
With vast suspense and action,
And not a scene that's flat.

Then comes another wise one,
And tears it all apart—
Speaks of its double meaning
For the weary sex-starved heart—
He calls it sure fire, meaning
That it will draw the crowds—
He also calls it second rate,
That shadows it like clouds.

And when I go to see it
I wonder what I'll find—
Will it be just sensation,
Or food for heart and mind?



IF YOU'RE running out of material, just run down to the east side any day or night. This goes for any city, town, or hamlet.

Art and the Box Office

By Monte Katterjohn

"WE are going to elevate the silent drama," numerous writers have announced from time to time since the screen has been taken seriously.

Many have tried, probably with all due sincerity, but their silence is eloquent testimony to the fact that they have hardly succeeded in their enterprise. Most have vanished whence they came.

Sometimes they say they have not been appreciated by the producers. But the answer to this is, I imagine, that the art they claim is unappreciated was employed to suit themselves — not the box office. They refused to recognize any audience but themselves.

What? Write for the box office? Never!

Yet——

Any writer who can create dramatic entertainment which will lure the public to the box office will have written something artistic—a fact some of the writers have overlooked.

Because their efforts were not appreciated by the public they claim artistry is beyond the ken of "the mob," which is another way some people have of "kidding" themselves.

True artistry is simplicity, and mirrored on the screen, is nothing more nor less than portraying that which is human and natural. Aforesaid "mob" never fails to respond to true artistry. A photoplay which is so artistic that it goes over the heads of Ma and Pa Tucker, not to mention Lizzie the ribbon clerk, is by no means artistry. Rather, it is the deformed off-spring of a high-brow who knows what the public wants. And the man or woman will never live on this earth who can tell the public what it wants in the way of entertainment.



Monte Katterjohn, who wrote the most sensational "original" ever screened, "The Flame of the Yukon," a photoplay which few cinema devotees will ever forget—in its day it shattered all previous box-office records—can and does write authoritatively on any phase of screen writing. He is pre-eminently familiar with the wide world of common hearts and minds. He wrote the last three scenarios for George Melford productions, and has just completed an original, as yet untitled, for Paramount. He is the young veteran of screen writers, and a member of the Council of The Screen Writers' Guild.

There is, however, a way of guessing. We can learn considerable by watching the box office lines at the theatres. If there's a crowd outside waiting to get into the next show, and these lines are still there a week later, it is pretty certain that the picture inside has artistic as well as entertaining qualities, because it is something that the public wants.

If you have the ability to recognize the entertaining qualities of such photoplays, and can then create a new and original story employing those same fundamental qualities, you will have written a story which will please the public because of its artistry.

I have no patience with those writers who wish to express themselves upon the screen. The "me" of an eminent scribbler's yarn isn't quite as important as his plot and incidental business.

In my own case, artistry never enters my

mind. However, I do find satisfaction in creating a situation which I feel will make the audience sit up and take notice. No situation or incident will accomplish this unless it is human and natural. It is best to leave artistry to the director, his technical and camera men and the hundred and one other studio aids. And if later, a critic comments that there is artistry in my treatment of the plot, it is my time to smile, because to me "that way" was the only treatment that seemed natural. Thus, artistry takes care of itself.

Recently I compiled a list of the thirty most successful picture productions of 1920 and 1921. In this list I did not include any of the so-called "great" artistic successes," which had unfortunately died in the theatres for want of appreciation. Instead I selected only those which had "cleaned up" at the box office. By a conscientious study of these pictures and their entertainment values, one can learn much, for they were the ones that made good.

But do not think that you have but to rubber stamp these successful types of stories. You must create anew, employing only their fires of quality. In other words you must originate on the same plane. It is my belief that the future of the motion picture play lies in the original story created expressly for the screen.

And in the words of Herbert Kaufman, "originality is bred in tormenting effort mothered by stubbornness—coaxed and spurred and sped to its goal by all the fervor of soul and faith."

Now you have the ingredients with which to make your next story—you need only an original plot.



Relativity

JOE MARTIN, noted savant, has just granted an audience to a group of scientists who called at his jungle bungalow in the Universal City zoo to get his personal opinion of the Einstein theory.

In the party were Prof. Olaf Uppas, Dr. Sylvester Sniffle, who recently astounded the scientific world with his amazing discovery of low pressure homepathological brew, and Prof. Cycle Velocipide, the noted Bulgarian chemist, who has devised a method of inhaling the protein from wallets, which has been enthusiastically adopted by the entire pick-pocket profession.

Leaving his watch in the rear of his cage, Mr. Martin waddled gracefully to the outer bars and wrinkled his nose becomingly in welcome. He indicated that he would be glad of the opportunity to express his views of the Einstein theory, which, he added, had afforded him many nights of perfect sleep.

"Professor Einstein's theory admits of rather interesting comment," he began. "There is no question about the relativity angle. It is proven by the fact that one relative stays with you longer than another; but on his idea of the transubstantiation of waffles I cannot agree. If it is definitely sure that molecules are amphibious it must be equally apparent to all morons that galvanized iron can never be successfully used for pajamas."

"But, my distinguished friend," horned in Professor Uppas, "may I not ask you how that astounding deduction will enable us to eradicate the prevalence of measles among the Mongolian chipmunks?"

"You may not," answered Mr. Martin, with the genial courtesy which has endeared him to the world.



REALISTIC CHARACTERIZATION: A flabby chinned youth with an empty mind and a suppressed boil on his neck, the best dancer and therefore the most popular chap in the smart set.



ELABORATION: The science of telling in five reels what might have been told in two.



LOGICAL FADE-OUT: And they lived unhappily forever after.

The Master Photodrama

By L. Hervey Parker

INSPIRATION is the key to artistic accomplishment. And what are we, as writers of the silent drama, to inspire with our work? Are we to fire the heart with faith in the innate nobility possible to humans, the youthful mind with ideals, and the matured intellect with enlarged philosophy? May we some day expect a liberal sprinkling of dramas that deal with the *supreme* strife and its inevitable outcome?

Upon what are we to predicate the tremendous drawing power of "The Miracle Man?" Let me venture to diagnose the secret in the face of the technicians who will say, Easy! Merely the emotional punch induced by the factors of the character contrast and the regeneration theme, plus well handled "sympathetic" elements.

My *cold* analysis would run thus:

Three groups of people today have a theme which is exceedingly "live" with them and one which touches on fundamental things. The story "The Miracle Man" was a plausible presentation of the theme, carried through by a well selected cast under good direction. *One* of these groups consists of those who believe that the seemingly marvelous cases of physical healing now transpiring around us are accomplished through yet uncharted powers inherent in *man's* mind and beginning to be grasped and exploited by a few. A *second* group are those who believe that simple religious faith in the power of an Omnipotent One together with a certain wisdom regarding the laws of mind are the cause of the healing. The *third* group comprises the large class of people who have not yet arrived at a postulated understanding of the principles involved, but are drawn by certain evidence and testimony to consider the subject indeed a "live" one. Looking *deeper* and seeing that this "Miracle Man" theme involves as it does the very heart of a universal question, God or no God, we see that the index points to the ineradicable and ineluctable thirst in human hearts after a Something, Person or Principle that is not limited but Infinite in its power over life.

The "unrest" of today is the unrest that inevitably succeeds an age of commercial accomplishment. It is the result of a complex which has a deeper element ever untouched by analyses. Man in the depths is "an incurably religious animal" and there is a hunger of the soul that will be satisfied with no bread lighter than a faith justified by conscious evidence.

The element of *high* inspiration must be poured into the film stories and productions of *tomorrow,* if the picture drama is to rise to the peak of grandeur and significance of which it is capable. A stirring in the depths that is not a mere striving of the softly sentimental sob centers; an intellectual "punch" that is not merely an acquisition of broadened knowledge of so-called facts, but a confirmation of intuitions rarely voiced or trusted. The fountain of philosophy inherent in all men but active only in developed men, can be powerfully aided by the silent drama in crumbling the dried crust of an existence which today drives men and women into excesses which are only variables of a quicker type of suicide. The Soul will not be denied its claim on Freedom.

The Theme Eternal

will be the basis for the truly great photoplays of the future, according to L. Hervey Parker, "the theme that involves the very heart of a universal question, God or no God . . . the ineradicable and ineluctable thirst in human hearts for a Something. . . ."

What, in brief, will be a few of the themes that will be *fed* to the hungry, and *punched* as seed-thoughts into the unwilling consciousness of the fog-bound, by the master flicker-stories of tomorrow? In whatever form, on whatever plane of life, or from whatever angle it is presented, the drama that will endure will be one that justifies the highest hopes of humanity. It will by the sheer power of its perfect logic and perfect fidelity to the soul drive home conviction that the application of perfect justice to the life of man is not an illusion but the one ultimate reality. It will instill the *realization* that the Tiger, the Wolf, the Hog, and the Monkey, those ancestral tendencies still working beneath the surface of Man's thoughts, will ultimately be cast out by Man's advent to the throne of pure reason.

There is growing fast into the conscious fabric of human thought today the dim perception that a Universal Brotherhood is *not too much* to expect as the outworking of the Life of a First Cause which is appearing also as a *final objective* of the life that perceives but does *not yet* completely reflect it.

Using the broadest interpretation of Literature as "that which is written" and the literate, "those who read,' the silent drama stands as a department of Literature whose group of "literates" will be, within a few years, practically *all* of the race. There will continue to be written the "average photoplay" and the "thrillers," but the master cinemas that will be viewed and reviewed by future peoples will be written by those who sensed the silent demand upwelling today, and lit their forges with sparks from the Eternal Fire.



The Cosmic Super-Production

For in and out, above, about, below,
'Tis nothing but a magic shadow show,
Played in a box whose candle is the sun,
Round which we Phantom Figures come and go

—*Omar.*



CENSORABLE: Any photoplay expounding the philosophy of "love one another." Fortunately for posterity, Shelley wrote "Epipsychidion" a hundred years ago.



TO write an artistic photoplay is best; to write a successful photoplay is next best.



SUB-TITLE FROM A RECENT PHOTOPLAY: A son was born to her during her absence.



ART'S PIVOTS: The censors and the butcher who runs the village movie palace.



LIFE: A scenario with an unhappy ending.



IMMORAL photoplays are like ghosts, which many people believe in but few have seen.

C. Gardner Sullivan

Eminent Photodramatist

"Lilac-tinted fingers of the June twilight caressing into a semblance of gentleness the harsh North New England hills—"

Thus speaks C. Gardner Sullivan in the opening title of "Hail the Woman." Six years ago he introduced a new note of beauty into the photoplay on the wings of poetic sub-titles—in the stories he wrote for William S. Hart. Beyond the shadow of a doubt these earlier Hart vehicles surpassed any that have followed.

Sullivan also invariably employed the law of correspondences: as above, so below. In his unmatched continuities, the mood dominant was expressed by portentous thunder clouds or sunny seas; nature frowned or smiled in tune with the mortal combat. No director could read a Sullivan continuity without feeling the vastness of background; the poetic, shadowy feel for strong pathos; the blending, like green leaves with golden flowers, of the characters with their environs.

While I cannot recall the exact lines of a sub-title Sullivan employed in "Hell's Hinges," one of his earlier originals, I do remember the thrill it occasioned: it swept lightly through me with the wistfulness of a song faintly heard on a river at dusk—conveying thoughts of unutterable homesickness; vague regret for something obscure in a remote past.

I have just finished reading the continuity of "Hail the Woman;" technically, it seems to me flawless. While my own Pagan soul does not respond to some of the Christian sentiments expounded, I cannot but feel dimly touched by the story as a whole. It is certain to be a popular success, and I wish that every photodramatist could read it, if only to marvel at the craftsmanship.

Several weeks ago I interviewed Sullivan at the Ince Studio. His ocean voyage and European sojourn have left him hardier and lustier than ever. His inspiration for "Hail the Woman" came from a conversation with a woman from New Rochelle, a fellow passenger on the steamship that carried him to the shores of the Old World. Her three sons were attending college, but of course her daughter—well, the mother's reasoning made him think many things.

"It was then I glimpsed a final trace of a bygone tyranny;" Sullivan told me this in earnest, inflexible tones—adding: "I envisioned the modern girl, ever to be depended on, ever doing the right thing in a tight place; wise, strong, *one of us,* a pal—never a dependent.

"Then there is the ever placid girl, unreached by modern thought, essentially negative, meek, always trying to please—a type, alas for the cause of Woman, only too prevalent. These two types of girlhood were my starting point."

C. Gardner Sullivan is an ardent believer in Woman; perhaps I should say—in thinking women; for, in commenting upon studio policies, he voiced a hearty thankfulness that his association is with Ince, the Titan, apostle of magnificent sweeps and passionate, powerful drama. He said he agreed with Belasco—"would never vote to abolish capital punishment so long as ingenues persisted on the earth."

He is dedicated absolutely to the original photoplay, written expressly for the screen in the human vein, aimed at the mood of recognition.

Many have attempted to follow him in the use of poetic sub-titles, most of them with maudlin, mawkish results.

He recently renewed his contract with Thomas H. Ince, at a salary said to be far greater than ever paid a photodramatist before, a yearly sum in six figures. This is significant. The production of as timely a story as "Hail the Woman" by one who is first, last and always a screen writer, should bring in its wake a new slogan in the Cinema world: "Hail the Screen Writer!"

—TED LE BERTHON



Questions Answered

Concerning the Writing of Photoplays

Q.—Is it advisable to choose for the principal character in a photoplay a man or a woman of forty years or over?

A.—From an artistic standpoint there is nothing undesirable about a story in which the principal character is forty years of age or more. From a practical selling standpoint, a leading character of such age is undesirable. The reason for this is that there are very few men and women being featured in such parts, and therefore the market for stories of the kind you mention is limited. If a story is big enough to be used as an all star production, the age of the characters involved is not important. In the "Miracle Man" for instance, the cast was chosen to fit the story without regard to any particular star. It might be said that the part of the Miracle Man, played by Joseph Dowling, was the leading part, and yet the parts played by Thomas Meighan and Betty Compson were of quite as much importance, so that there really was no one star in the production. Practically speaking, there is a larger market for stories featuring younger people. There are a great many ingenue stars seeking stories in which the leading character is a girl of anywhere from eighteen to twenty-five, and there are a number of young male stars looking for stories—men like Wallace Reid, Thomas Meighan, Bert Lytell, Charles Ray and others. The chances of selling stories for these younger stars are much better than in the case of any other class of material.

Q.—Will the introduction of a few war scenes which form a vital step in the plot lessen the value of a story in the judgment of the average producer?

A.—Since the termination of the world war, producers have not wanted war stories, but if a drama is big and strong enough the introduction of a few war scenes will not be likely to kill its selling possibilities. If such scenes are really vital, leave them in, but if they can be eliminated without destroying the value of the story, it is better to do so.

Q.—In writing a photoplay, is it well to collaborate with someone who has had fictional experience?

A.—I like the idea of two persons collaborating in photoplay work. Fictional experience is not particularly valuable unless the individual is familiar with dramatic and screen values. Many fiction writers are utter failures as photodramatists because ,while they understand the technique of narrative fiction they are lacking in knowledge of photodramatic plot composition.

Q.—Supposing that a time lapse is necessary in the middle of the story, requiring a new locale and the introduction of a new set of characters, would the story therefore be unattractive from the producers' viewpoint even though it were powerful and well worked out?

A.—It is difficult to give a definite answer to this question without knowledge of the individual story in question. Time lapses are avoided whenever possible, for each time that one is used the audience has to become familiar with a new locale and the new characters, and this is an undesirable sort of interruption in the action of the story. If your story is sufficiently powerful and admirable in other respects the time lapse may be forgiven. Time lapses and jumps from one locale to another distant one are sometimes necessary and unavoidable. No final decision can be made without a careful analysis of the story in question.

Q.—Since popular taste varies so constantly how is one to judge the demands of the market in time to endeavor to supply what it desires? Is it any guide to study audiences?

A.—You have hit upon what is probably the most serious problem that confronts the photodramatist. Exhibitor, distributor and producers are lying awake nights trying to predict the trend of popular taste. In a broad way, the big demand is for stories of modern American life with sufficient heart interest to arouse the emotions of each member of an average audience. In addition to this, comedy dramas, built for laughing purposes, are also much in demand. Costume stories, or stories of other lands, are being used from time to time, but unless they possess unusual dramatic strength they are less desirable than stories of our own country. Studying audiences is an excellent means of reaching the pulse of public taste.

Q.—Is there any definite way to learn what is censorable and what is not? If real life is depicted in a dramatic, logical plot structure, what guarantee has the writer that it will not be ruled out by tyrannical censors because it is too realistic. Is there any means by which the benighted and confused writer may judge whether certain situations that exist in real life are censorable or not?

A.—The rules of the National Board of Censorship, or as it is officially known, the National Board of Reviews of Motion Pictures, may be obtained by addressing the secretary at 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City. This national board functions in a fair and broadminded way and rules out merely the utterly obscene and lascivious portions of pictures. The menace that we are having to contend with is the local state, county and municipal board of censors that is to be found here and there throughout the United States. No one ever knows what these boards will do. Their decisions are always conflicting and what is perfectly moral in one community is deleted as immoral a few miles away in another. All that we can do under present circumstances is to avoid anything that is in opposition to the rules of the national board and trust to luck so far as the local censors are concerned.

Gossip Street

From Hollywood Boulevard to Times Square

Kennedy and Kennedy

At the Metro the last scenes have just been shot in "Glass Houses," a farce-comedy, with Viola Dana as star. Clara Genevieve Kennedy wrote the original story, and her sister, Edith Kennedy, wrote the script. The author, on reading the continuity, declared she couldn't have done better herself! Is this the only case of the kind on record?

Palmer Branch

Roy L. Manker, Vice-President of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, has opened a branch office at 127 North Dearborn Street, Chicago. He will remain in Chicago until after the termination of the Goldwyn-Chicago Daily News Scenario Contest in order to serve in an advisory capacity Palmer students who enter the contest. Permanent offices will be established in Chicago.

Pity the Blind

"She should wear," wrote Harvey O'Higgins in describing an ultra-modern costume to be worn by Wanda Hawley in "The Love Charm," which the eminent dramatist wrote for Realart, "one of those gowns which begin late and end early."

All of which argues for Harvey an exceptional gift of descriptive phrase.

A Virgin's Paradise?

The latest to succumb to the lure of scenario writing is Hiram Percy Maxim, inventor of the Maxim silencer, who is responsible for the story of " AVirgin's Paradise," the Fox feature. Mr. Maxim has fussed about in the past with all sorts of high explosives, but never with anything as dangerous and ignitable as a screen star, and this is quite his first offense at inventing plots.

No Secret

Gloria Swanson is expected home almost any day and will start work very shortly thereafter on Clara Beranger's original story, "The Husband's Trademark," which Sam Wood will direct and Thompson Buchanan supervise.

A Moon Blossom

Arthur Hoyt has just been added to the cast of Wanda Hawley's new Realart picture, an original by Lorna Moon.

Shades, Attention!

Basil King, famous author of "Earthbound," has returned to Los Angeles to write some more stories for the screen. He is at the Goldwyn studio.

Heads Title Department

Wells Hastings, noted magazine writer, scenarist and former associate of D. W. Griffith, has been signed by Supervising Director Elmer Harris as head of a newly formed title department at the Realart Studio.

Writes Successful Plays

Joseph A. Jackson, Director of Publiicty for Goldwyn, has recently written two very excellent one-act plays, "The Retake" and "The Iron Judge," both of which were presented at the California Theatre, Los Angeles. For once, the public and the press were in accord, as not only were the plays enthusiastically received by audiences, but they were highly commended by the dramatic critics.

Violet Blooms

Violet Clark's unique genius and fresh viewpoint is attracting wide attention evidently, as that youthful demoiselle has been in demand at several studios. After completing the continuity of Hunt Stromberg's "original"—"The Foolish Age," at Robertson-Cole's, she performed the same services most effectively upon John Blackwood's "Cry Baby." At Realart, that time. Then she wrote, in between times, "Bellboy Thirteen" for Douglas MacLean at the Ince Studios.

With Palmer

Marian Wightman, a Vassar graduate, and erstwhile fifteen months on the Thomas H. Ince scenario staff, is now a critic with the Advisory Bureau of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation. Incidentally, Miss Wightman is the author of "Peter," the Drama League prize play which recently had its Los Angeles premiere with Robert Edeson in the title role. "Peter" will soon open in New York.

The Palmer organization also announces the signing of C. J. Wilson, Jr., a veteran photodramatist, formerly with Goldwyn, and at other times with Fox, Triangle, and Universal.

Back to the Great City

H. H. Van Loan, noted photodramatist, has returned to Los Angeles after a long sojourn in the piney fastnesses of Washington. His communion with the silent places has resulted in several new original photoplays. More about these later.

New Organization

Graf Productions, a San Francisco syndicate, formally opened the new Pacific Motion Picture Studios at San Mateo this week with the "shooting" of the first scenes in "White Hands," a story by C. Gardner Sullivan, starring Hobart Bosworth.

Ince Busy

"Hail the Woman," the big Ince feature drama of the year, is undergoing the most thorough editing in the cutting room ever given an Ince production. The producer looks upon it as his greatest achievement in screen drama, while the members of the Ince staff have not limited their enthusiasm for the success of this picture. It is a homey drama of American life of today, with an all-star cast including Florence Vidor, Lloyd Hughes, Madge Bellamy, Theodore Roberts, Tully Marshall, Charles Meredith, Gertrude Clair, Mathilde Brundage and Edward Martindel. "Hail the Woman" is a C. Gardner Sullivan masterpiece.

"Lucky Damage," another Ince special for release in December, which includes Milton Sills and Florence Vidor in the cast, is also in the hands of the Ince film editors.

Two Hobart Bosworth productions, "Blind Hearts" and "The Sea Lion," and "Love Never Dies," a King Vidor production, are also in the Ince cutting rooms.

Can You?

Can you write comedies of boob or shabby genteel variety? Then work the old typewriter overtime and sent in a few to the Pacific Film Company. The former kind is sought by Vernon Dent and the latter by George Ovey.

Saturday Night

"Saturday Night," an original story by Jeanie Macpherson, will be produced by Cecil B. De Mille as his next special.

Artillery Note

Raymond Cannon will enact a principal part in Goldwyn's all-star production of Julian Josephson's original photoplay, "The City Feller."

Realart Originals

Elmer Harris, supervising director, announces the purchase of the following stories for early Realart production: For Bebe Daniels, an original story especially written for the star by Nina Wilcox Putnam. For Mary Miles Minter, a novel original story by Aubrey Stauffer. Mr. Stauffer is now a member of the title writing staff at Realart.

Rob Wagner, having been studying at close range the Realart people and requirements for a month or so, has written an original story which will be an early and appropriate vehicle for Constance Binney.

Hollywood Daily

Hollywood Photoplayers are to have a daily paper when The Citizen, a popular weekly sheet, changes over to a daily on October first. T. Hardwood Young is editor.

Fame

June Mathis used to think that her name was known to everybody in these Drynited States as a scenario writer. But she's changed her mind. The other day a circular letter came to her house stating that a fine course in scenario writing is offered by the extension division of the University of California, in Los Angeles. Evidently a clerk went through a city directory.

Rupert Hughes, Goldwyn eminent author and photoplaywright, has received the following letter from an admirer:

"I enjoy your acting very much and am making a collection of favorite movie picture stars, and would be pleased if you would send me your picture to add to my collection."

What Food Will Do

The visit of Nina Wilcox Putnam to Los Angeles and her daily luncheons with Bebe Daniels in her dressing-room at the Realart studio, have borne fruit. Miss Putnam has written a story for Miss Daniels. It has received the o. k. of Elmer Harris, supervising director, and has been pronounced great by Bebe herself. The figures on the check have been settled to the satisfaction of both parties, and it will be Miss Daniels' second production.

Celestial Tidings

Gouverneur Morris, Goldwyn Eminent Author, is now writing an original Chinese fantasy for the screen, called "What Ho!—The Cook!" and will have a distinguished Oriental actor in the leading role.

Nine to Ninety

Doris May's first Hunt Stromberg Production, "The Foolish Age," directed by William A. Seiter, for release by R-C Pictures Corporation (Robertson-Cole), was completed last week.

The photo play is an original story written especially for Doris May by Hunt Stromberg.

At Last—Fame!

Lucita Squier, whose initial efforts as a scenario writer are disclosed in Marshall Neilan's "Bits of Life," has experienced the thrill that comes once in the life of every movie celebrity.

No longer does Lucita doubt that she is well started on the road to fame.

Recently she experienced the thrill of seeing her first picture in a newspaper, but this was as nothing compared to her latest cause for excitement.

In short, Lucita has received her first fan letter!

It is from a young lady in Phoenix City, Ala., who saw her photograph in the morning paper and promptly dispatched a long letter to Miss Squier telling her that she looked both beautiful and intelligent.

Lucita's first autographed photograph is in the mail!

Ince-side Information

If the screen doesn't show a little additional zip and pep next year, it isn't going to be the fault of Thomas H. Ince.

The latest addition to the Los Angeles colony of literary celebrities working overtime on stories for the 1922 motion-picture productions is John Fleming Wilson, noted magazine writer. According to announcement, Wilson will arrive here next week on contract to write a series of originals for Ince specials.

Jack Cunningham

Do newspaper men make the best scenario writers?

Some say yes; others say no. But a case in point is Jack Cunningham, who has just written the photoplay for Jack Holt's first Paramount starring vehicle, "The Call of the North."

He has worked on about 100 newspapers in various parts of the country from Chicago to New York. He has been everything except a stereotyper, including city and make-up editor.

He was a printer's devil while he was going to school.

He left Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, before he got through with his course and became a reporter.

From that he graduated to the publicity game and piloted Mme. Montessori, the Italian child educator, through the mazes of the American press.

He has been a scenario editor and has written scenarios for most of the stars.

And he ventures to say that newspaper training is a mighty fine school for screen writing.

"Meller" Originals

Victor Hugo Halperin, formerly associate and literary assistant to Elbert Hubbard, the late "Sage of East Aurora," and co-editor with the famous genius of the Philistine and Fra magazines, is the latest of the literary luminaries to sire brain children exclusively for the delectation of the movieites.

Mr. Halperin has just turned over to the Ranger Bill Miller Productions "Dead Man's Boots," first of a series of 10 original stories of the Northwest Mounted Police. "Never Say Die," the next, is in progress.

Finis Fox Begins

Finis Fox, scenario writer, who recently organized his own picture concern, is to start work Saturday on the first of a series of Finis Fox productions. Jack Livingston is to be featured, and Fox will direct.

Over the Pond

Robert Hichens, famous English novelist, is to write an original story for Famous Players-Lasky British Producers, Ltd., according to word just received at the Lasky studio.

Walter Anthony

As an expression of his zeal to develop the musical aspects of motion picture presentation, Sid Grauman announces the engagement on his staff of co-workers of Walter Anthony, well-known music and dramatic critic whose critical and biographical articles and lectures on musical subjects have given him the standing of an authority not only in the West but in New York, where his magazine articles and correspondence have earned wide audience.

Anthony is technically equipped to discuss music in its structural elements and was for years a student of harmony and counterpoint under the celebrated theorist and composer, Homer A. Norris of Boston. He held the music and dramatic editorship of the old San Francisco Call until it became an evening journal when he took the music and dramatic editorial desk of the San Francisco Chronicle.

Twelve Originals

Leave it to Irving Lesser to think up something new every few days. Now comes news of a deal with Edna Schley, who has just signed a contract with Irving M. Lesser and Mike Rosenberg of the Western Pictures Exploitation Company, whereby she will give that organization a series of twelve two-reel comedy-dramas.

N. Y. Chief

Eugene Mullin, well known writer, editor and director, is now in charge of Goldwyn's New York scenario office.

Cute Titles

"Bobbed Hair" by Hector Turnbull is the next Wanda Hawley feature instead of "Cry Baby" by John Blackwood.

With Stromberg

Lewis Milestone, formerly of the Ince Studios staff, has joined the Hunt Stromberg unit as chief film editor.

Sapience

Marie Prevost has completed "The Girl Who Knew All About Men," from the story of Roy Clements. Doris Schroeder wrote the continuity.

A Long Felt Need

That the direction of motion pictures will in time be a part of the curriculum of the universities and schools of the country, is the prediction of Herbert Brenon, the director who made Norma Talmadge's picture, "The Sign on the Door." Brenon is convinced that in the future there will be in every great university a motion picture faculty, who will train the youthful mind for the profession. Brenon states that France, especially, and Italy also, were already adapting a department in their large schools devoted to motion picture instruction, and that he has seen several very capable directors turned out by the continental schools. Of course, experienced directors function as instructors, states Mr. Brenon.

Columbia Course

There comes the encouraging report that one of our largest universities is going to teach photoplay writing. The aim in this course is reported to be simply to train the student to write photoplays which will meet commercial needs, and to bring him in touch with the policies and needs of the various producing companies.

Mrs. Patterson, who will handle this course at Columbia, explains that "there are certain fundamental principles with which every prospective writer of the photoplay must be familiar." She feels that the prospective scenario writer must know the development through which the photoplay has passed and the technique of the photoplay, which is different from that of any of the other arts.

This new course, it is announced, will endeavor to give the student the fundamentals in the training for a scenario writer.

New Pictures

New pictures completed at the studios include:

"The Gray Dawn" (Hampton), all-star; "Buddies," with Johnnie Walker; "What No Man Knows," with Clara Kimball Young; "Fate," with Clara Hamon; "The Sin Flood" (Goldwyn-Lloyd), all-star; "The Sheik" (Paramount-Melford), all-star; "The Woman in the Case," with Betty Compson; "Don't Tell Everything" (Paramount-Wood), all-star; "The Song of Life" (Mayer-Stahl), all-star; "Lady Fingers," with Bert Lytell; "Little Eva Ascends," with Gareth Hughes; "The Mouse" (Selig-Rourke), all-star; "The Rosary" (Selig-Rourke), all-star; "Terror Trail," with Eileen Sedgwick; "Lucky Carson," with Earle Williams; "The Fourteenth Lover," with Viola Dana; "The Daughter of Brahma" (Frothingham), all-star.

"Under the Lash," with Gloria Swanson; "The Rowdy," with Gladys Walton; "The Gray Dawn" (Hampton), all-star; "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," with Frederick Warde; "The Primal Law," with Dustin Farnum; "The Hidden Spring," with Jack Gilbert; "Hail the Woman" (Ince), all-star; "After the Show" (Wm. de Mille), all-star; "Exit the Vamp," with Ethel Clayton; "Don't Tell Everything" (Paramount), all-star; "Slippy McGee" (Morosco), all-star; "The Love Charm," with Wanda Hawley; "Spring Fever," with Bebe Daniels; "The Happy Ending," with May McAvoy; "Fifty Candles" (Willat), all-star; "No Story at All," with Will Rogers; "Branford of Rainbow Ridge," with Hoot Gibson; "Pardners," with Harry Carey; "The Rage of Paris," with Miss Dupont; "The Girl Who Knew Men," with Marie Prevost; "Love Never Dies" (Vidor), all-star; "Steelheart," with William Duncan; "Lucky Carson," with Earle Williams.



THE triumph of the season: "Getting Gertie's Garter," a farce by Wilson Collison and Avery Hopwood, a melange of small-time smut in the traveling salesman vein. This stage success is another proof of the superiority of the spoken over the silent drama—in the matter of avoiding censorship.



Photoplays in Review

By the Staff

One Wild Week

Frances Harmer certainly achieved a work of art in "One Wild Week", Bebe Daniel's latest starring vehicle. She started out to write a gem of nonsense and hilarity and thoroughly accomplished the purpose. One will travel far to find a more satisfying hour of entertainment. The title is actually appropriate, something unusual for photoplays these days, for there's not a tame or unamusing moment in the whole five reels. What is more, it's all as refreshing as clear brook water or roses after rain. While many broad comedy gags punctuate the story, they're timely in every case and do not lead one too far from the story proper. One of the most delicious scenes in many moons is the one whereby the heroine is stranded on a roof and forced to finally—sans dignity—leap into a firemen's net. A fine bit of characterization—all students of phopoplay writing take heed!—is that of the aunt. "One Wild Week" is a masterpiece of sheer nonsense, and is not of the general run of pseudo-clever trifles that pass as comedy drama. Its logic won't bear too close examination, but it's not supposed to be logical or sensible; it's just harmlessly delightful.

Synopsis—Pauline Hathaway is a rebellious orphan under the strict thumb of a spinster aunt, but she has one ally, the friend of her dead mother, who plans to get her away upon her eighteenth birthday, which approaches.

It transpires that her grandfather's will leaves a fortune to her providing she does not become in any way notorious for a period of six months; otherwise Auntie gets the coin.

So Pauline leaves to visit another friend of her mother's, vowing to be a saint. But a pickpocket plants a stolen wallet on her just before she leaves the train, and the irate person to whom the wallet belongs insists upon jailing her. She has visions of her name in the newspaper, and Auntie and her suitor enjoying the fortune, so she refuses to give any information except to say that her name is Sally Bump, and that she is innocent. The judge sends her to a detention home for a week, while his young relative, who is interested in criminology, is favorably impressed by the fetching prisoner. He has invented a psycho-seismograph, and gets permission to try it on the criminals in the detention home. Thus he discovers that Pauline is innocent, and he promises to use his influence to get her out.

But she has a number of amusing encounters with other inmates, and that night she leads three other girls to liberty through the window and over the fence, only to come upon the young professor with his car. He refuses to aid them, so they tie him up and Pauline uses his car to arrive at her original destination.

Meanwhile, the friend, the aunt and her suitor, and the woman Pauline was to visit, have arrived at a tense state of excitement because of her disappearance, and have solicited the aid of the judge, who recognizes Pauline's photograph and leads them to the detention home, only to find that she has escaped.

Pauline and the girls are making themselves at home when the young professor arrives, and acquaintances are renewed, but the coterie of friends and relatives approaches and Pauline takes to the roof to avoid capture. The professor endeavors to rescue her, and a firemen's net is finally brought so the young people can leap to safety. Pauline's innocence is established and the aunt vanquished, with prospects of a romance between Pauline and the professor.

God's Country and the Law

Every photodramatist should by all means see "God's Country and the Law"—in fact, should be forced to see it, in order that he may leave the theater cursing inwardly, but somehow chastened; the more he turns this photoplay over in his mind, the more will he be determined to never, never, never, write anything like it! After the American intelligentsia has been partially won over to photoplays, after witnessing "The Kid" and "The Four Horsemen" and "Broken Blossoms", along comes this horrible example of asininity. If it had been intended as a half whimsical, half grotesque comedy, it might have "gotten by," but—well, what's the use?

With educational institutions from coast to coast offering courses in photoplay writing—conspicuously Columbia and the University of Southern California—and many of the young idea studying the same through correspondence, there should be a law passed against earnest students being in any way intimated to believe that "God's Country and the Law" is the kind of story to write.

James Oliver Curwood, or the adapter, wasted no time in "subtle art" when brewing this bad tasting concoction; a typical Mack Sennettish villain with Mack Swain mustachios and Hank Mann eyes, is introduced as the one "snake" whose wriggling shadow darkens the bright sunshine of *God's own country.*

Now, for the hokum. A young married woman —very, very sixteenish and very, very pretty—is seen disporting with wanton abandon through beautiful groves and on the marge of a woodland lake. Her apparel is very abbreviated, displaying to consummate advantage delicately formed bare legs; this little married elf's flimsy bit of dress is of postage stamp proportions, perhaps covering slightly more of her anatomy than a one-piece bathing suit would have covered. She has a gay, cheerful, wholesome young French-Canadian husband.

I have traveled a bit for a young man, even through Canada, and have never encountered a young lady so utterly dishabille as the heroine of "God's Country and the Law". There are many times I would have liked to have encountered such a one, but I never had the good fortune to run across even a foolish, young unmarried thing who flitted over cool trails attired so delectably. Once, right here in our own Sierra Madres, I stumbled across the Norma Gould dancers traipsing artistically about, but they were practicing and didn't actually live in the mountain fastness in which I chanced upon them. Well, anyhow—

The "snake" entered this modern Eden, and was welcomed to the shanty of the happy young couple; while wholesome hubby snored "the snake" told the girl about "the great city". She almost weakened, but just then hubby woke up, so the "snake" postponed his sinister intentions. Another day dawns and while hubby is out shooting breakfast, we see wifey coquettishly swishing her abbreviated skirt, much to the visible agitation of the stranger—i. e., "snake". She stands on a chair to reach for something, disclosing much more of her delightfully formed limbs; the stranger's significant glances at this point leave little doubt as to what he is thinking of.

Inevitably, he pounces upon her, but his fell design is never accomplished, due to Fate, the mounted police, and her husband.

Now, here are a few of the discords struck: No gal as beautiful as this little North woods flower would have ever given a second glance, despite remarks pertaining to the great city, at anyone so obviously hideous as the "snake"; no virile man, since Time and this sad world began, could have failed to have been mysteriously disturbed by the flighty and flimsily clad young woman. Why blame the villain for the automatic workings of Nature? Of course, there are always a few highly developed men in any community gifted with a sense of humor; this type of man would not have molested our heroine, but his holding off would simply be on the grounds of his not wishing to become entangled with any feeble-minded woman.

False psychology is ever a distinguishing mark of trash. The screen version of God's Country and the Law is the kind of photoplay that causes fun to be poked at all photoplays. Its appeal is essentially sensual, especially in the scene where the heroine is poised on the chair. The significant glances of the villain are, and are meant to be, carnal. They are also—ridiculous.

Herein is revealed the damnable stupidity of censorship; such a photoplay is passed intact—probably because of *virtue's* triumph, while a screen play based upon a story dealing with passion and romance outside of wedlock, no matter how exalted and circumstantially justified, would never "get by" the censors. Neither will many honest, dignified stories which happen to do with fundamental motivation, or reveal those elements of life which most influence the individual career.

Synopsis—A French-Canadian is wanted by the Mounted Police for selling contraband whisky, but escapes the pursuit by hiding in the cabin of an old violinist and his halfbreed daughter. When Dore makes love to the daughter, the father drives him out and destroys his one god, a rattlesnake charm. Going on into the North woods, Dore seeks refuge in the cabin of Andree and Marie, an ideally happy and "childlike" young couple. Again he makes love to the girl, and is beaten up by the husband. While in hiding, Dore sees the husband going for a doctor from the Mounted Police and conceives the idea of stealing the girl. When Andree and the doctor find the girl missing they set out in search of her, the doctor coming onto the camp of the violinist and his daughter. Marie regains consciousness and fights Dore, and rather than let him touch her throws herself over a cliff. The daughter of the violinist finds her and with the aid of the doctor and her father carries Marie back to her home, where Andree finds her when he returns after his fruitless search. Meanwhile Dore has been wandering half demented in the woods, pursued by visions of his crime, until at last he is driven back to the cabin, where seeing Marie alive, he falls dead, recognized by the Mounted Police.

The Oath

The plot of "The Oath," while fairly well constructed, is built upon such a weak premise that the whole structure topples at an absurd angle. The central character is an unsympathetic, peevish, petulant, narrow-minded woman, possessed of neither sense nor heart. On her selfish demand for an oath of secrecy hangs the fate of the man she loves, but she won't speak the truth, and lets another woman perjure herself and compromise her honor in consequence. The ending is quite melodramatic, forced, and too dependent upon coincidence to be convincing. The picture is another example of the efficacy of a novelist's smooth explanations and charm of style to cover defects in plot, and the inadvisability of trying to screen a story not originally written for a photodrama.

Synopsis—Minna, a Jewish girl, marries a Gentile in secrecy for fear of her father's anger. After a bit of a quarrel, she makes her husband swear under oath that he will never reveal the secret nor ever see her again. That same night the father is murdered and the young husband is arrested and brought to trial. Because of his oath, he will not tell where he was at the time of the murder, but he is suspected of trying to protect the name of some woman. His wife rants and tears her hair, but cannot bring herself to tell or absolve the husband from the oath. Then the wife of a friend rushes to the witness stand and says he was with her that night while her husband was on a hunting trip. This frees the young husband, but separates the other couple. All four chance to meet some time later in Cannes; Minna then confesses to the other husband and is about to commit suicide from the rocks when her husband rescues her and the other husband finds his wife and all ends happily.



WHAT would you do to the critics whose words you took in respect to a recent spectacle? Yes, we would like to do the same—considering that it costs to live these days and one has so few hours for enjoyment.



IN the scenario class at school, twenty years hence: When is a photoplay successful? Answer: When it's not written by an eminent author.

The Eternal Esperanto

(Continued from Page 12)

it. Thus, except in the rare cases when both sculpture and film are colored, the sculptor and director are working in a monotone medium and both are striving for the same result—the one in the round, the other on a flat surface, simulating the form which is not there by an arrangement of light and shade calculated to create an optical illusion.

In saying that all arts are kindred we are uttering a platitude. The making of fine moving pictures is an art just as surely as it is not an art to model an inferior statue or write bad music. The big things in all art, we know, are the simplest things, those which are stripped of all the pretenses and affectations of the artist.

John Sargent's frieze of the prophets in the Boston Museum, and the saints in the reredos of the Church of St. Thomas on Fifth Avenue, New York City, by the sculptor, Lee Lawrie, are among the finest examples in America of the splendidly simple thing in art.

In them we see what lies beneath the surface rather than the surface itself. When the screen shows us what lies behind the eyes and in the hearts of those whose reflections are thrown upon it, then it also is accomplishing something toward this end.



The Photoplay Market

Compiled by Jane Horton

FIVE-REEL DRAMA —FEMALE LEAD

May Allison
Betty Blythe
Alice Brady
Alice Calhoun
Catherine Calvert
Ora Carew
Irene Castle
Helen Chadwick
Mildred Harris Chaplin
Naomi Childers
Ethel Clayton
Betty Compson
Viola Dana
Marion Davies
Priscilla Dean
Eleanor Faire
Elsie Ferguson
Pauline Frederick
Lillian Gish
Corinne Griffith
Vera Gordon
Edith Hallor
Elaine Hammerstein
Juanita Hansen
Wanda Hawley
Alice Joyce
Alice Lake
Florence Lawrence
Louise Lovely
Katherine MacDonald
Vivian Martin
Mae Marsh
May McAvoy
Mary Miles Minter
Carmel Myers
Alla Nazimova
Eva Novak
Jean Paige
Eileen Percy
Mary Pickford
Dorothy Phillips
Ruby de Remer
Irene Rich
Edith Roberts
Ruth Roland
Teddy Sampson
Gloria Swanson
Mabel Julienne Scott
Eileen Sedgwick
Anita Stewart
Blanche Sweet
Norma Talmadge
Rosemary Theby
Florence Vidor
Gladys Walton
Pearl White
Clara Kimball Young

FIVE-REEL DRAMA —MALE LEAD

John Barrymore
Lionel Barrymore
Hobart Bosworth
William Desmond
Elliott Dexter
William Farnum
Sessue Hayakawa
Gareth Hughes
Lloyd Hughes
Thomas Jefferson
J. Warren Kerrigan
James Kirkwood
Montague Love
Bert Lytell
Frank Mayo
Thomas Meighan
Owen Moore
Tom Moore
Antonio Moreno
Harry Myers
Eugene O'Brien
Charles Ray
William Russell
Joe Ryan
Milton Sills
Conway Tearle

FIVE-REEL COMEDY-DRAMA —FEMALE LEAD

May Allison
Billie Burke
June Caprice
Marguerite Clark
Viola Dana
Bebe Daniels
Dorothy Gish
Wanda Hawley
Justine Johnson
Mollie King
Doris May
Mary Miles Minter
Mary Pickford
Constance Talmadge

FIVE-REEL COMEDY-DRAMA —MALE LEAD

Douglas Fairbanks
Carter de Haven
Johnny Jones
Douglas MacLean
Tom Moore
Charles Ray
Wallace Reid
Bryant Washburn

FIVE-REEL COMEDY

Charlie Chaplin
Max Linder
Charles Murray
Kala Pasha
Ben Turpin

FIVE-REEL WESTERN

Art Acord
Harry Carey
Lester Cuneo
William Duncan
Jack Drum
Ray Gallagher
Neal Hart
Jack Hoxie
Tom Mix
Pete Morrison
Antonio Moreno
Will Rogers
Tom Santchi
Russell Simpson

THREE-REEL COMEDY

Harold Lloyd

TWO-REEL COMEDY —FEMALE LEAD

Vioria Daniel
Dorothy Devore
Louise Fazenda
Phyllis Haver
Irene Hunt
Pearl Shepard
Edna Shipman

TWO-REEL COMEDY —MALE LEAD

Jimmie Adamas
Alexander Alt
Jimmy Aubrey
Monty Banks
George Bunny
Charlie Chaplin
Chester Conklin
Clyde Cook
Bud Duncan
Neely Edwards
Harry Gribben
Lloyd Hamilton
Ham Hamilton
Buster Keaton
Jack Livingston
Harold Lloyd
Hank Mann
Harry McCoy
Lee Moran
Charles Murray
Kala Pasha
Larry Semon
Sid Smith
Ford Sterling
Harry Swett
Ben Turpin
Bobbie Vernon
Jack White
Leo White

TWO-REEL WESTERN —FEMALE LEAD

Josephine Hill
Helen Holmes
Fritzie Ridgway

TWO-REEL WESTERN —MALE LEAD

Art Acord
F. Braidwood
William Fairbanks
C. E. Hatton
J. B. Warner

ONE-REEL COMEDY

Ida Allen
Eddie Boland
Billy Fletcher
Gaylord Lloyd
Harry Mann
George Ovey
Snub Pollard
Rex Story

SERIAL

Ann Little
Ruth Roland
Antonio Moreno
Eddie Polo

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This Side of Nirvana

(Continued from Page 18)

and sight seeing trips, supplemented by intelligent and authoritative discussions on the financial needs of the industry, are planned.

Flowers for the Living

I have before me a copy of Comoedia, a Parisian theatrical magazine, issue of May 5. In it is an interview with Jeanie MacPherson. In translating the same I find that Miss MacPherson received her early education at the school of Mlle. Defacques in Paris and that she left for America just prior to the outbreak of the world war. In the interview the fact is brought out that the art of scenario writing does not exist in France. Miss MacPherson is quoted as believing the cinema industry should flourish amid such magnificent landscapes as Fontainebleau, Nice, and Versailles. Towards the conclusion of the interview, she says: "We have in California the Palmer School of Photoplay Writing, which has proven to be a very useful institution. I wish that France with her writers of vivid imagination could have a school like Palmer's; I truly believe it would encourage scenario writing." There are several paragraphs of comment on scenario technique. The interview terminates with Miss MacPherson expressing a desire to some day return to France and make a glorious cinema production revealing the heart and soul of the French people.

From the tone of the article, it seems that the DeMille photoplays and Miss MacPherson as a screen author are held in high esteem by the French cinema-going public. The French ever love color—and daring.

The $30,000 Scenario Contest

There is no stronger proof of the immediate, pressing need of story material than the National Scenario Contest conducted by the Goldwyn Film Corporation and the Chicago Daily News. For it was Goldwyn who consistently exploited "eminent" authirs. At that, it takes a great soul with some vision to realize a mistake; the facts are that Samuel Goldwyn has ever been a pathfinder and trail blazer; he has simply been an assiduous seeker after "the higher and better picture."

Every amateur screen writer in the United States should join this contest, which is not limited to Chicagoans, and is only barred to employees of the Goldwyn Company and The Chicago Daily News. Of course, art is long and time is fleeting—for the contest closes November 1st, by which time all manuscripts must be in the hands of the contest editor.

Here, briefly, are some particulars of the contest: There will be $30,000 awarded in thirty-one prizes. The first prize will be $10,000. There will be ten second prizes of $1,000 each and twenty third prizes of $500 each. Goldwyn guarantees to film the winning scenario.

Every contestant must register with the Scenario Contest Editor of the Chicago Daily News, 15 N. Wells St., Chicago. In order to do this, it will be necessary for those living outside Chicago to obtain a current copy of the Chicago Daily News and fill out the assignment form and registration blank therein printed.

Manuscripts must not be more than 5,000 words, and must be written on one side of paper only. No limit is placed on subject or style of manuscript, but contestants are reminded by the News that stories which conform to published hints and directions of film experts will be more likely to receive favorable notice.

The judges of the contest are: David Wark Griffith, Charles Chaplin, Samuel Goldwyn, Norma Talmadge, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Rupert Hughes, Gertrude Atherton, Gouverneur Morris and Amy Leslie.

LET us have all kinds of motion pictures. Do not be one of those who say: This is art; that is not art; we are wise; the rest are fools.



We sold her first story to Thomas H. Ince

YET ELIZABETH THATCHER *never dreamed she could write for the screen until we tested her story telling ability. Will you send for the same test—FREE?*

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'I had never tried to write for publication or the screen," she said in a letter to the Palmer Photoplay Corporation. "In fact, I had no desire to write until I saw your advertisement."

This is what caught her eye in the advertisement:

"Anyone with imagination and good story ideas can learn to write Photoplays."

She clipped a coupon like the one at the bottom of this page, and received a remarkable questionnaire. Through this test, she indicated that she possessed natural story-telling ability, and proved herself acceptable for the training course of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation.

And Thomas H. Ince bought her first attempt

Only a few weeks after her enrollment, we sold Mrs. Thatcher's first story to Mr. Ince. With Mr. Ince's check in her hand Mrs. Thatcher wrote:

"I feel that such success as I have had is directly due to the Palmer Course and your constructive help."

Can you do what Mrs. Thatcher did? Can you, too, write a photoplay that we can sell? Offhand you will be inclined to answer No. But the question is too important to be answered offhand. Will you be fair to yourself? Will you make in your own home the simple test of creative imagination and story-telling ability which revealed Mrs. Thatcher's unsuspected talent to her?

Send for the Van Loan questionnaire

The test is a questionnaire prepared by H H. Van Loan, the celebrated photoplaywright, and Prof Malcolm MacLean, former teacher of short-story writing at Northwestern University. If you have any story-telling instinct at all, send for this questionnaire and find out for yourself just how much talent you have.

We will be frank with you. The Palmer Photoplay Corporation exists first of all to *sell photoplays*. It trains photoplay writers in order that it may have more photoplays to sell.

With the active aid and encouragement of the leading producers, the Corporation is literally combing the country for new screen writers. Its Department of Education was organized to produce the writers who can produce the stories. The Palmer institution is the industry's accredited agent for getting the stories wtihout which productoin of motion pictures cannot go on.

Not for "born writers," but for story-tellers

The acquired art of fine writing cannot be transferred to the screen. The same producer who bought Mrs. Thatcher's first story has rejected the work of scores of famous novelists and magazine writers. They lacked the kind of talent suited for screen expression. Mrs. Thatcher, and hundreds of others who are not professional writers, have that gift.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation cannot endow you with such a gift. But we can discover it, if it exists. And we can teach you how to employ it for your lasting enjoyment and profit.

We invite you to apply this free test

Clip the coupon below, and we will send you the Van Loan questionnaire. You will assume no obligation. If you pass the test, we will send you interesting material descriptive of the Palmer course and Service, and admit you to enrollment, should you choose to develop your talent. If you cannot pass this test, we will frankly advise you to give up the idea of writing for the screen. It will be a waste of their time and ours for children to apply.

Will you give this questionnaire a little of your time? It may mean fame and fortune to you. In any event, it will satisfy you as to whether or not you should attempt to enter this fascinating and highly profitable field. Just use the coupon below and do it now before you forget.

PALMER PHOTOPLAY Corporation, Department of Education

I. W. Hellman Building, Los Angeles, California

PLEASE send me, without cost or obligation on my part, your questionnaire. I will answer the questions in it and return it to you for analysis. If I pass the test, I am to receive further information about your Course and Service.

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ADDRESS.....

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THE PHOTODRAMATIST

NOVEMBER 1921



Scene from Mack Sennett's "Molly O"

Articles by

Zona Gale, Cecil B. De Mille

Ellis Parker Butler — *and Others*

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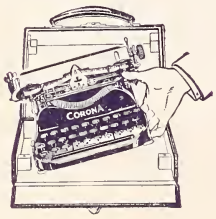
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NOVEMBER, 1921
Volume III. No. 6.

Official Organ of the Screen Writers' Guild
of the Authors' League of America

The PHOTODRAMATIST



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LEGAL SERVICE BUREAU

Palmer Photoplay Corporation



The Palmer Photoplay Corporation announces the inauguration of a Legal Service Bureau, to be operated in the interests of students of its Department of Education, and established authors.

Competent and adequate legal service, designed not only to fully protect authors' legal rights but to enable them to obtain United States copyright on scenario material, is now available to members of this bureau.

The Legal Service Bureau is under the direct personal supervision of an attorney of twenty-five years' experience in all phases of motion picture practice.

A booklet descriptive of the service will be mailed upon request. Address Legal Service Bureau, Palmer Photoplay Corporation, 533 I. W. Hellman Building, Los Angeles, Cal.

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Official Organ of the Screen Writers' Guild
of the Authors' League of America

The PHOTODRAMATIST



A Georgeade

Celluloid Flavor

ONCE on a time, when the Cinema Palaces had begun to grow Thick and Fast in the land, the Directing Heads of a new Producing Company drew nigh the table for a Conference. In substance they spake thus among themselves: "Lo! a clamorous Public invites us to Produce a Story written in celluloid, in many editions, which we may scatter abroad, and gather as Recompense much Kale. Therefore, for our Stomach's sake, let us produce a story that will draw us a Large Profit, and with a Measure of Proceeds, we will produce yet more stories at Profits, and dwell long and prosperously in the land. Our brothers of the Sexart Co. have made Big Hauls on recent Releases of Toothsome Flavor portraying Choice Bacon rolling in Mud. Let us not forget, therefore, that Bacon is a dish dear to the Public Heart, and make a Frequent Showing of the Choicest Bacon in modern Mud Wallows. The Public demands it. Storied Mud and Muck makes the Best Seller."

But as the Daze passed by, there began to be audible a Murmuring from the Sidewalk Liners which was translated into Wisdom by some in this Wise: "We are Fed Up on Gold-Cured Hog-Meat. Give us Simple Stories from the Lives of the Toiling Masses. We want Dramas of the Throbbing Heartaches and Triumphs of Them Asses." The murmur grew to a Sizable Howl and some producers who had on the Shelves and in the Print-shop a considerable volume of Unsold Stuff, cursed the Fickle Public and began to cast about for Dope that was less Septic. Some were able, however, to augment their Income through presenting Tremendous Spectacles. But though fat and tender Stock was used for the Stripped Bacon served at these Optical Feasts, the fires of Histrionic Genius were not used in the cooking, and the Multitude did not Enthuse Heavily. Some were Smote by a Great Light, and took to filming Bible Stories of the Prophets, but as there proved to be no visible Profits in these, they were turned over for Free Exhibition as Drawing Cards at the Sunday Evening Services. There continued to be produced a Large Mass of Old Reliable Stuff such as Torrid and Tearful Triangle Tales, Passionate Romances of Short Vamps, and Expensive Adventures in modern Eating Houses in which much Confetti and broken Glassware were scattered about by the Gilded Swine at the height of the Evening's Entertainment, as The Sunrise broke across the Stained Glass. There were tales of Honest Country Lads who arrived Timely on the Scene of Action, to save beautiful and Unsophisticated young Buds from Damage at the Rough Hands of Lounge Lizards whom they had Happened to Meet in Low Dives. High Dives were also exploited for a time in connection with Splendid Scenes with Father Neptune arrayed in Splendor, a long Beard newly-Combed, and a Cardboard Crown. Taken altogether, during the Era of Cleaner Stuff there was Presented a Judicious mixture of Light Romance and Mother Love and Thrilling Adventure and the Industry was Getting By.

However, after the Censorship Gale and The Foreign Film Peril were weathered, there was an Uneasy Feeling that, in view of the Fickleness of the Public, it would be

Well to keep open a Weather Eye to observe Such Pictures as drew Well at the Box Office End. Some who essayed to feel the Pulse of the Public, decared they had Discovered the Secret of Popularity, and Asked the Penpushers to supply stories with a Spiritual Twist. Some Scribes, acting on their Understanding of this Pregnant Germ, sent stories of badly Twisted Spirits with Exceedingly Twisted characters. The Doleful seat Holders were in some cases Cheered by Uproarious Incidents concerning Hootch-Hounds who Canned their Yeast-Crop in twist-neck French Wine Bottles. But at the last Account received from the Lot they were Still Searching for the Great American Super-drama and the Public was Admitting, contrary to the Testimony of the Press Agents, that It hadn't been done This Season.

Moral: There are a lot of Good Seeds thrown to the Wind because it was a Wise Guy who first wrote "There's no accounting for Tastes." —L. H. P.



Improving on Omar Khayyam

By Beverly Glenn

LIV.
(To the producer)
Waste not your effort in the vain pursuit
Of "adaptations" trimmed and patched to suit,
Better be watchful for the man or maid,
Screen-wise, and trained to write in action mute.

XXIV.
(To the writer of a "hit")
Ah, make the most of what you yet may spend,
Before into the discard you descend,
The public soon forgets and casts you by,
Sans fame, sans car, sans fortune and—the End.

XLVII.
(To the photodramatist)
When you and I our writing days have past,
Oh, but the long, long time the screen shall last,
Which of our Coming and Departure heeds,
As the Sea's self should heed a pebble cast.

XXXVII.
((To the world at large)
For I remember stopping by the gate,
To watch a title-writer thump his pate,
And with its half apologetic tongue,
It murmered—"Gently, bone-head, gently, Mate!"



WHAT ever became of Maeterlinck's original stories, written for Goldwyn? Why don't they re-issue the greatest photoplay ever made in this country, "The Whispering Chorus?" When will David Wark Griffith select a screen story worthy of his genius? What is Miss DuPont's first name? Will King Vidor film "Jurgen?" Who was the electrician at Lasky's who called Sir Gilbert Parker "Gil"? What is Gertrude Atherton's opinion of motion pictures? When will George Jean Nathan write his first scenario? Why did some one recently ask Ham Beall to tell him what Christopher Columbus looked like?



Reading Your Scenarios

By Bryan Irvine

MUCH has been writen about that mysterious individual, the scenario or staff reader, in the past several years. Yet, after all has been read and digested the humble reader is still only a hazy, unreal mortal to the thousands who are writing scenarios.

It is with the hope that the staff reader can be made more of a living, breathing human being to those who write for the screen that this article is written. Just what does the reader do in his den at the studio? Is he just a paid automaton who, or which, like a steadily grinding machine, wades through the material on his desk, or does he now and then give thought to the hopes and aspirations of the thousands who patiently turn out story after story? How is the reader linked with those who write scenarios? Is he their friend, or does he merely find the faults of a story and shoot it on through the mill as wasted effort? Where and why do most of the stories submitted fail before the eyes of the reader? These and other questions I will try to cover.

The Studio Reader

"Is not a cold, hard-boiled literary ogre who passes your stories on with a contemptuous glance," writes Bryan Irvine of the Thomas H. Ince scenario staff readers. He has read thousands of scenarios; in this article he tells the screen writer what to avoid. There will be a second article by Mr. Irvine in next month's PHOTODRAMATIST — offering writers sound, solid food for thought.

First, let us take up the much mooted question: Does the reader become "stale"? Does he, as a result of long, tiresome hours devoted to reading threadbare ideas, become careless, too critical, unfair, useless as a judge of a story's merits? No doubt some readers do. The reader who does not enjoy his work is undoubtedly a stale reader. The real reader, the one whose heart is in his work, does *not* become stale, and I believe those of the latter class are in the majority. The reader who gives the best in him in return for his weekly pay envelope improves in efficiency and proficiency every day that he goes to the studio, reports to the contrary notwithstanding. The mass of scripts, magazines, books on the desk of the reader who likes his job does not dismay or frighten him. He wades into the material with real enthusiasm. He is lured on by the same hope and expectation that calls the prospector into the desert; when he finds something a bit "better" among the submissions on his desk he is just as pleased as the prospector who finds gold.

"Stale" readers are few, for the simple reason that their "don't-care" attitude invariably shows up in their work, and the Argus-eyed scenario editor is quick to diagnose the reader's ailment.

Though a reader is paid, not to create, but to direct and analyze the brain children of others, he can, and very often does, in making a synopsis of a submitted story, eliminate any objectionable features or elements, if, in doing so, he does not injure or weaken the basic idea or plot—coincicidence, improbability, objectionable sex interest, illogical or unnecessary situations, et cetera. He can, and very often does, help the author along by injecting a little strength here and there in a story. Yet, most of the writers look upon the staff reader as a cold, hard-boiled literary ogre who "passes their stories on with a contemptuous glance."

It is not only the duty of a reader to look for stories which, as a whole, are original or different, but to carefully sift each submission with an ever watchful eye for any original "twist" or "business" which would tend to redeem an otherwise wornout or commonplace idea. Producers have been known to buy a hopelessly threadbare plot because somewhere embodied in the story was one good bit of business or one situation that stood apart from the story proper

as original or unique. To "pan out" these occasional nuggets of originality cannot be done by "skinning" or "jumping" through a story. The conscientious reader reads every work of every story placed on his desk.

It is an old alibi, but in this case it is an actual fact, that space forbids me telling why so many stories fail to get beyond the first reader. To attempt to tell why one-tenth of the ideas submitted to the producer are utterly useless to him would require reams and reams of paper, and no editor would care to print it. Therefore, let us consider some of the more "popular" faults of writers and their work.

Writers in Boston, New York City, Paris and London write stories of life on a western cattle ranch. The cowpunchers, sheepherders and farmers in the west write lurid society melodramas of New York City, London and Paris. The farmer's daughter writes of life on the stage and the actress writes of life on the farm. So it goes, the propensity of at least a third of those who write being to write about something they know nothing about, selecting an atmosphere entirely foreign to them.

Death bed confessions and eleventh-hour reprieves come in by the score. "The Miracle Man," "Over the Hill," "Humoresque," "Lying Lips," arrive daily to squat on the reader's desk. The reader sees dozens of characters in the same old plots ruthlessly slain with the paper knife or the ever-present bronze statue in the hands of one of the female characters. What a welcome relief it would be to see just one "heavy" strangled while standing in a corner or lying on the floor! No such luck; they must be bent over a table to be choked properly. With us yet is the band of Gypsies or Indians who kidnap the poor little rich girl, and heaven knows how it would all end if the poor little girl didn't have the locket her mother gave her, the mole behind her right ear or the birth-mark on her left shoulder. I could never understand how a girl can hang onto a locket for twenty years or more, and I can't keep a new penknife more than a month. If it were not for the mortgage on the old farm or the light in the window at night many people would have nothing to write about. Why these writers continue to waste postage is a problem to tax the minds of psychologists. Of course, there is no law against writing such stuff, and if the writers get even a mild "kick" out of it I suppose the reader has no kick coming, he being paid to read it.

In the studio's daily mail is an alarming number of stories of "drab" atmosphere. Contrast is utterly ignored in thousands of stories. Poverty and wealth should be intermingled or a little of one or the other injected to relieve monotony. The best stories are usually in the "happy medium" atmosphere, where wealth is not flaunted before us in every scene and where poverty is not continually depicted to a depressing degree.

The thirty-six dramatic situations certainly hold thousands of original complications or twists. Yet, it is very seldom that a reader finds in the material on his desk an idea that stands head and shoulders above mediocrity. The reader's desk is a mirror of the past. Old, worn, threadbare plots are there every day. We read over and over again the plots that were popular years ago. Whenever a smashing screen success is turned loose on the public the plot of this success comes back to the studio in every mail, disguised now and then, of course, but the same old plot nevertheless, and it continues to come back every day like the proverbial cat long after the success has died a natural death. What does this mean? The answer is painfully obvious: sheer laziness on the part of the writers or plain inability to create. Apparently, they cannot write if they are not allowed to copy. They hope against hope that the idea will "get by" some unwary producer. Fat chance!

For many years the advice of the people "in the know" of the producing end of the moving picture industry to those who want to write for the screen has been "study the screen." This valuable advice has been followed by some writers. It has been the school and ultimate success of many writers. But about ninety per cent of those who go to the movie show to study, did not study; they merely watched, and the result of their watching is evident in the studio's daily mail, the same old plots, rubbed to a clear transparency through overuse, come home again.

It is positively ludicrous what lengths some writers will go to in an endeavor to create a situation. Most of these "forced" situations are improbable or illogical. The most pernicious methods of bringing about one of these so-called situations seems to be hinged on some character's desire for revenge with no sane reason or provocation for it. Motivation seems to be of little im-

portance to many who write—or try to write—for the screen.

It is safe to say that four out of every ten stories submitted to the studio has, among the characters who make the alleged story possible, the heavy who, regardless of all common sense or motivation, grabs the heroine and carries her away to the hills or makes a prisoner of her somewhere in the city with an old witch or a paid crook to guard her. This villain is nearly always a wealthy, popular man, successful in business and known to every policeman and detective in the city. No sane man, villain or otherwise, will resort to such crude methods of getting the girl he wants. Yet, they do it every day—on the reader's desk at the studio. This is only one of the numerous old "stock" bits of action used by thousands of writers to bring about a so-called situation. Not one in a hundred stories of this type has the faintest gleam of originality. They are all the same, obvious from beginning to end. The hero rescues the girl, the villain is killed or sent to prison, and all live happily ever after—except, of course, the villain.

Next in line comes the "straight" story —narrative. Here we have the story that slides along in one tiresome rut. For example: Several families are crossing the plains in prairie schooners. They are several months on the road and the Indians are on the warpath. The families hunt, fish, pick berries, fight Indians and have a good time, while a sweet young thing in the party is being wooed by one of the stalwart young muleskinners. Incident after incident which has nothing whatever to do with the main plot—if there is a plot—while the young people make love. After we have traveled several thousand miles without anything coming off but an occasional scrap with the Indians, the muleskinner up and marries the girl. There it is! The story is told. Gripping! Interesting! The poor reader has read on and on even as the prairie schooners rolled on and on. He has hoped all the time that something would happen, some conflict, some counterplot. He simply could not believe that the writer, with malice aforethought, would lure him on through a tiresome series of incidents to a very ordinary wedding. But the writer did that very thing, and, needless to say, it got the reader's goat. The big climax was nothing more than a wedding that was contested by no one.

Visualize that story on the screen. We see the party leaving Missouri. We go with them day after day, scene after scene. Nothing to cut to to relieve the monotony; no conflict, no counterplot, no suspense; nothing but the prairie schooners, the mules, the lovers and their families. We see them doing the things that everybody had to do in the early days while crossing the plains. Scene number one: Prairie schooners on the plains—muleskinner making love to our beautiful little Susie. Scene number two: Prairie schooners on the plains—muleskinner making headway in his suit for Susie. And so on, ad libitum. This seems to be the most glaring fault of most new writers. What is the cure? Visualization. If they would but sit down and visualize the story before putting pen to paper they could readily see how uninteresting the story would be to others. Create a counterplot or several of them, so that we can jump from the prairie schooners to something else. Bring in some conflict. Everybody seems to have their own way with everything in the story outlined above. Toll off several factions and pit the wits of each against the wits of the others. Give us some suspense, some plot, something to keep us guessing. Do something. Don't make us read through a pile of junk that has no beginning, no middle and no end.

(Continued in December number)



THE sand that has run through Life's hour glass can not run through again, but the past of our eternity contains today's stories: memories which may be immortalized in celluloid.



THE photodramatist prostitutes himself who writes in favor of popular prejudices—unless they be his prejudices, in which event he is an inferior artist.





The Screen Writers' Guild Clubhouse

This idyllic rendezvous, one of Hollywood's most poetical garden spots, is located at the corner of Las Palmas Avenue and Sunset Boulevard. It will be formally opened October 29th as the home of "The Writers," and the western home of The Authors' League of America

The Guild Forum

A monthly department devoted to the interests of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America, the official organization of recognized photodramatists and studio staff writers.

By Alfred Hustwick

The Screen Writers' Guild

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Dwight Cleveland, Recording Secretary.

Executive Committee

The officers and Thompson Buchanan, Elmer Harris, A. S. LeVino, Jeanie MacPherson, Frederick Palmer, Elmer Rice, Rob Wagner.

"WRITERS" Open Oct. 29th

Oyes! Oyez! Oyez!

Fellow Members of The Screen Writers' Guild.

List to the joyful announcement of the scribe who has twice promised—and twice failed—to set down in these columns the date of "The Big Night."

The formal opening of "The Writers" will actually, definitely, and beyond peradventure of a doubt, take place on October 29th.

On that occasion the members of the Guild and the associate members of the club will, with the guests of their bringing, assemble at the magnificent clubhouse, corner Sunset Boulevard and Las Palmas, to make history—and raise Cain.

If You haven't written or telephoned to the secretary by the time you read this, informing him of the number of guests you are bringing—*Do It Now!* Even that Prince of Prestidigitateurs, yclept Eugene Presbrey, can't materialize supper for all, and guarantee a sufficiency of grape-juice, unless he is informed well in advance of the number to be entertained.

What's going to happen at this rip-roaring house-warming? Ask Marion Fairfax—she knows! It's going to be a regular old Hallowe'en party, with modern trimmings, full of thrills and surprises. Every one attending is requested to bring a sheet and pillow-case, a punkin' lantern, a false nose and some tangible evidence of his or her possession of the Hallowe'en spirit—say, a neighbor's gate or an undertaker's sign. A word of warning is here in order. Eugene Presbrey has designs on such useful articles as sheets and pillow-cases. Hang onto 'em.

As regards the details of the program. The entertainment committee is so darn' reticent, so scared that its secrets will escape, that the publicity man was promptly chased away from its session with only a few meagre facts in his possession. However, from a source which may not be disclosed, he elicits the following:

The evening will begin with a parade starting from Culver City and proceeding via various outlying studios to Universal City, and thence, by way of the Hollywood studios, to the clubhouse. The order of the parade will be as follows:

Marshal's car containing Auto Club representative and Rupert Hughes, carrying banner, "Dangerous Curve Ahead."

Brass band.

Allegorical float, "Days of 1909," containing pioneer screen writers.

Fife and drum corps.

Cages of assorted literary lions and lionesses.

Float representing "The Discovery of Hollywood," containing former New Yorkers now among Hollywood screen writers.

Ukelele band.

Symbolic train of floats representing the growth of the motion picture from a "One-Reeler" to an "Ultra-Super-Special Feature."

And many other things too numerous to mention.

At the clubhouse there will be Hallowe'en pranks, dancing, eating, conversation, more Hallowe'en pranks, and a program of stunts, thrilling, amusing and entertaining, but not edifying.

Rob Wagner will exhibit his group of trained pets in a tableau entitled, "The Happy Family," showing a producer, a photodramatist, and a director in the same cage with a wild Blue Sunday advocate and a ferocious censor.

The event will end with the public execution of all members guilty of dignified conduct or "shop-talk" during the evening.

The above information was not guaranteed to be exact, but it was all the scribe could obtain by the bribery and corruption of a committee member. The thought occurs that the real program will be even more entertaining than the one outlined.

Anyway, it will be a big time for all, a free treat for members and their friends with "The Writers" making its first bow in the role it is to fill in the future—host to the screen writer and his associates. Come one, come all!

Protecting Your Script

Every screen writer knows, or will know when he reads this paragraph, that it is impossible, under the present copyright law, to copyright a moving picture continuity or synopsis. There *are* ways of evading this law and securing what is the equivalent of copyright but the trick involves considerable time and expense and requires a finesse in accomplishment that rules it out as a means of protecting the screen writer's product. Furthermore the Guild furnishes protection equal to copyright and at a negligible cost.

As every writer understands, the value of a copyright is simply that it establishes priority of invention. In case of an action based upon plagiarism or piracy the plaintiff is required to show that he, on a given date, claimed the authorship of the disputed composition. If this proof can be presented he has a strong foundation for his case. Failing this proof his claim rests upon a very weak support.

How can priority of invention be established? The simple way is to register the manuscript with some person or some organization whose business character and standing are such that any court would recognize the validity of the registration. For instance, a reputable law firm, or The Screen Writers' Guild.

Under its by-laws the Guild is empowered to conduct, and does conduct, a bureau of registration covering screen material. The service of this bureau is not confined to members. Any author of such material may, for a nominal fee, secure registration. The protection is the same as that which would be afforded by copyright, if such material were copyrightable. A record of the date of registration and a copy of the material is preserved under seal in the Guild's records which are always available for the purposes of establishing proof.

Several hundred MSS. have already been registered by members and non-members. The fee is fifty cents for members and one dollar for non-members. Send MSS. to The Secretary, Screen Writers' Guild, 6716 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, with a fee for each MS. for which registration is desired.

Dues and Duty

In explanation of a notice which may have been received by some members prior to the publication of this paragraph the editor of this department wishes to call attention to the following paraphrase of certain sections of the constitution and by-laws of the Guild:

Annual dues of all members are due and payable within thirty days after the acceptance of invitation to join the Guild . . . and . . . any member who shall fail to pay his dues within thirty days after notification shall be suspended until his indebtedness is paid.

The Guild *Must* be operated according to its by-laws, otherwise its acts are illegal. Will delinquent members please co-operate with the executive body of the Guild to make suspensions unnecessary. The club will be open in a few days. Under the by-laws its privileges can only be extended to members in good standing. If you're delinquent through carelessness or apathy don't stay so. Get out the old check book and square yourself. "If your doos are doo, do your dooty."

Half-reels

The Entertainment Committee of the club, in addition to its labors in connection with the club opening on October 29th, is making good progress with its plans for a monster masque ball at the Ambassador, to be held later in the season. From present indications this affair promises to be one of the biggest and most interesting events in the history of the profession. Details in the next issue of The Photodramatist.

Nine members of the executive body of the Guild have been appointed to represent the Guild on the Council of the Authors' League. The proxies of these members have been sent to Elmer Rice, one of the nine appointees, who is now in New York. Mr. Rice will represent the Guild under instructions from the Council and Executive Committee.

A committee from the Guild has been appointed to meet with a committee from the Producers' Association to discuss the possibilities of combined effort in the fight against censorship.

Palmer Organization Endorsed

Report of the Executive Committee of the Screen Writers' Guild

"The Writers,"
6716 Sunset Boulevard,
Los Angeles, Calif.

Mr. Ted LeBerthon,
Editor,
The Photodramatist.

Dear Mr. LeBerthon:

Will you be good enough to give the accompanying extracts from the minutes of the meetings of the Guild's executive committee complete publication in your forthcoming issue? I feel that the importance of the committee's action is such that it merits full publicity and would suggest that, in place of a condensed version of the proceedings in "The Guild Forum," which may not be generally read by your many subscribers who are not members of the Guild, the full text be published under a separate heading.

Yours very truly,
ALFRED HUSTWICK,

Editor, "The Guild Forum."

From the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee of The Screen Writers' Guild, Oct. 5th, 1921:

On motion, seconded and carried, it was RESOLVED, that inasmuch as the minutes of the Executive Committee of the Authors' League state that: "It was decided to start a campaign in the Bulletin against the promises held out by the correspondence schools as to teaching art, story, dramatic and motion-picture writing by mail"; and, inasmuch as Frederick Palmer is a member in good standing of the Authors' League and the Screen Writers' Guild, and is a member of the Council and the Executive Committee of the Guild, and is the founder and president of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation which does conduct a correspondence course in the technique of photoplay plot composition; therefore, in justice to Mr. Palmer and the Authors' League, it is moved that three members of the Screen Writers' Guild, who have not been and are not now in any way associated with Mr. Palmer in business or as pupils, be appointed to investigate the Palmer methods of instruction and report back to the Executive Committee of the Guild on Wednesday, October 12.

The chair appointed the following committee—Thompson Buchanan, Albert Shelby LeVino, Eugene W. Presbrey.

From the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee, Oct. 12, 1921:

The committee appointed to investigate the Palmer methods reported as follows:

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation is a highly organized, splendidly appointed institution, managed by cultured, professional men and woman who have individual records for expertness and experience. It was founded four years ago upon the presumption that the technique of any Art or Science can be taught.

It teaches, by correspondence and orally, the technique of moving picture scenario writing, and its methods are standardized.

It teaches, encourages, and develops ambitious writers who survive its rigorous tests and makes a professional of the amateur. It sells the stories of its graduates to moving picture producers. It is encouraged, commended and indorsed by the most prominent producers and writers in the Los Angeles moving picture world. Mr. Cecil B. De Mille, William De Mille, Jeanie MacPherson, Thomas Ince, C. Gardner Sullivan, J. Parker Read, Rob Wagner, Frank Woods, and many other noted men and women of accomplishment lend their names and wise counsel to the Palmer organization.

The special committee appointed by the Screen Writers' Guild to thoroughly investigate the Palmer methods reports the following findings:

1. Purpose.—That the fundamental purposes of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation are well founded, honest, sincere and splendidly adapted to the future necessities of the motion picture Art, for which special writers of original stories, with highly trained knowledge of a new technique, must be discovered and trained.

2. Method.—The Palmer method eliminates the undesirables and the incompetents

and accepts as students only those who pass a rigid preliminary examination and show marked ability, and money alone cannot place a student in the Palmer School. The Palmer teachers, editors and critics are cultured and experienced. The work of all students is subjected to the severest of professional tests. Students who fail to meet these tests are advised not to go on, and money they have paid is refunded.

3. Results.—The sales department of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation is managed by professional men and women known to all motion picture producers. Through this department the best work of Palmer graduates finds ready sale. In a recent contest for prizes amounting to $5,000.00, offered by a prominent producer, Mr. J. Parker Read, Jr., all three prizes were won by Palmer students.

The organization is graduating recognized writers of original stories.

4. Financial—The Palmer Photoplay has been organized four years. It has never declared a dividend. Every dollar of profit has been invested in the development of the organization. It started in three small rooms. It has expanded to Academy proportions, and occupies sixty splendidly appointed rooms, housing every factor of efficiency, human or mechanical, that can contribute to the logical growth of a great enterprise. It is obvious that a special building will soon be needed to house this new Academy of a new Art.

5. It is obvious that the Palmer Photoplay Corporation could, if it chose dishonest methods, employ a small force in few rooms, and rapidly pile up independent fortunes for its four projectors. These projectors are taking meagre salaries and turning all legitimate profits into development of their idea.

6. Recapitulation.—The Palmer Photoplay Corporation is to be commended for honest, sincere purposes and methods, and to be congratulated for practical results of high value to the Motion Picture Art.

Respectfully submitted,
Eugene W. Presbrey,
Chairman of Committee.

Following the reading of this report several members made verbal reports on their personal investigations and endorsement of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation.

Moved and seconded that the report of the special committee be adopted. Carried.

On motion made, seconded and unanimously carried, it was Resolved, that the Executive Committee hereby endorses the Palmer Photoplay Corporation as sincere in purpose, honest in conduct and efficient in its methods.



Fade-out
When he last
Kissed the first
Girl he loved.



PHOTOPLAY writing, or any other form of expression, should be an end in itself, and not a means. One's work should be itself the reward of all rewards—not the profit accruing from one's work. Small souls delight in any kind of work, as long as it yields a handsome financial income.



THERE is no limit to the possibilities of the motion picture as a medium of art expression; the limitations are within directors, photodramatists, actors, cinematographers. Too many are trying "to measure mountains with four-foot rules and plumb oceans with pudding strings."



ARTISTIC photodramatists know better than to sip too much of any one brand of sunshine; they know the value of occasionally consorting with sinister thunder clouds.



Seeing Lulu Bett Through

By Zona Gale

ONE night last winter I was driving across Broadway with some friends when I saw a sign, placed on a corner theatre in such a fashion that it nearly faced two streets. An electric sign, with letters several feet high, and colored, announcing the film presentation of a novel which all the world was reading a few years ago. The man who had written that novel was in the back seat of our car.

I said to him: "How does it feel? Famous though you are, how does it feel?"

He did not lift his eyes to the sign. He said: "It feels ——." He told how it felt.

We all said: "Impossible. You know you like it."

He replied: "I have never even seen the thing. Nothing would induce me to sit for three hours before that screen."

I thought then, and I think now, that this attitude is simply incomprehensible. I can not imagine not wishing to see one's book filmed. Even if the performance was intolerably bad, refusing to go to see it seems to me like the attitude of a mother refusing to go to see her son on the stage. Especially if she had put him there! I confess that I can understand refusing to have a film made. But having consented, and accepted the money, I should want to see it through.

The same state of mind is mine toward a play. To writhe because a given actor has not the same conception of a character as its author is a species of glorified egoism, is it not? How fascinating to see what that actor's characterization *is*. Besides, it is perfectly conceivable of a truly creative bit of writing that the author himself is in need of information about his own character. If his character really "came through" and was not devised he may think: "What did I mean by that chap, anyway?" Insisting that a character, merely because one c r e a t e d him, should perform just so is as if a mother gave continual cues to a child instead of—some of the time, at least — watching him develop. Of course, at one's own play, one may be permitted to writhe a little; but one also does that occasionally during the rest of the day as a matter of course.



ZONA GALE

The author of "Miss Lulu Bett"—perhaps the finest novel written in America since Dreiser wrote "Sister Carrie" and "Jennie Gerhardt"—is quite satisfied with the treatment accorded her masterpiece on the stage, and expects great things from Wm. de Mille, who is making a screen version.

When "Miss Lulu Bett" was to be produced as a play, my f r i e n d s all said: "Prepare to suffer." Even the producer, Mr. Brock Pemberton, expressed his sympathy. Real playwrights told me that the high agony of their lives had been on their first nights, and still higher had been the agony of rehearsal. I did not believe them then. I do not believe them now. And as for myself, I had a wonderful time right through the rehearsals, all of which I was permitted to attend. The play was produced on December 27th. On the night of the 24th, as I

was leaving the theatre, they asked me whether I would be at rehearsal next morning. I replied that I would be there, and puzzled down the street as to why they had asked that. Was I after all expected to have the good taste to be absent occasionally? Not for some blocks did I realize with relief that the inquiry had been because the next day was Christmas. I am rather ashamed of that. But at least it means that I was having an absorbingly interesting time. And the first night was no less than happy.

It may be naive, but I expect no less of the film of "Miss Lulu Bett." I have been at the Lasky studio in Hollywood a few years ago, and have watched a rehearsal conducted by Mr. De Mille. I thought that his work that day was truly creative work. If he presents a group of human and faulty people, acting as such people act in life, I shall not feel injured if they do not happen to be the particular human and faulty people whom I had in mind. Again and again the play improved upon my own casual conception of this or that situation. I shall expect as much of the film.



Only an Actor

Dedicated to the late Harry Duffield

By Frederick Palmer

Only an actor, a mummer of words,
  Only a painted mime,
Only a puppet to please the herds
  With the mouthing of other men's rhyme.

No niche in the Hall of Lasting Fame,
  No page in the Book of Deeds,
Only a grave of forgotten name,
  Only a mound in the weeds.

But the soul of the mime was the soul of a man,
  And the heart of the man was true,
And his heart and soul have crossed the span
  To the call of the Final Cue.

The play is over, the Curtain down,
  The rain beats cold on the clod,
And Hamlet is one with the grimacing clown,
  For a man has gone to his God.



PHOTOPLAYS with happy endings will ever be in demand; but the artistic photodramatist will never allow his ending to be anticipated. Who knows but that the apparently unhappy ending to life is not—at the grand moment—happy? Perhaps the Eternal Artist handled well the elements of the Cosmic story—so that the end cannot be anticipated.



Writing Up to Lizzie

By Alice Eyton
of the Realart Scenario Staff

IN extenuation of many things, including Lizzie:

In and out of the moving picture world, like a constant irritant, flashes the perennial query: "Must we always write down to Lizzie?"

The producers, who have to keep one eye on the box office and the other on the stock market, the once despised, but indispensable continuity writer, whose soul seethes with rebellions he means to let loose as soon as the bankroll permits (oh, day of days!), and all the fry between are deeply concerned with this question.

Likewise—is it not a favorite theme of the vacuous elite, and the over-stuffed

Yea, verily! And Lizzie is the only one who never says a word.

Which gives rise to the salutary thought that perhaps Lizzie is not as foolish as the rest of us.

Nevertheless, as Lizzie has become the innocent bugaboo of motion pictures, we must, perforce, establish her relativity, as Mister Einstein would say.

To begin with Lizzie doesn't yearn to see "the world as it is" on the screen. Why should she? She pays her hard-earned money to adventure into new worlds, and we cheat her if we don't give her a glimpse of other worlds.

Here, as elsewhere, however, we must consider our aforementioned relativity. While introducing other worlds than are embraced in the humdrum realities of daily life, we must give those other worlds a reasonable relationship to the actual sociological structure.

There isn't anything necessarily ridiculous in Lizzie's desire to have a shopgirl marry a millionaire, a waitress become a duchess, or a poor boy a Captain of Industry. But these desires are ridiculous when the newly-made millionairess, or duchess has so little wit as to continuously swish her tail and adopt a haughty demeanor toward her servants, or when the Captain of Industry performs single-handed feats that are only probable to Captains of Industry in the aggregate.

If the *nouveaux riche* are over-assertive in actual life they are lampooned for being so; and we should lampoon the writer who departs (except for legitimate comedy purposes) from the simplicities that make folly of artificial etiquette. In short, we can write up to Lizzie's yearning spirit and still refrain from writing down to her faulty education. We can conserve her great, instinctive knowledge that the joy of life consists in always expecting something to happen around the corner, and yet refrain from making that happening the final inartistic word. We can encourage her hope for "the best" in life, and refrain from making that "best" an orgy of bootleg liquor, jazz, and limousines. We can give her her colloquialisms without over-stressing them, and losing the forcefulness of simple English, freed of flamboyant striving.

Let us take from Lizzie, as well as give to her. Most of us are slightly shop-worn. Lizzie isn't. Hers is the eternal idealism of youth, however uncouth its outward garb. That idealism should have a screen value far in excess of the external crudities we, in our thoughtless arrogance, have deemed greater than Lizzie's innate intelligence.

If the same time were spent in advertising, reproducing, and disseminating the Idea of Lizzie's intelligence that has been spent in fostering her crudities, Lizzie might still spend her dimes with us. Who knows but that she might even stagger to the dizzy heights we set for her?

One thing is very certain. Something must be done to make Lizzie stop haunting us. And the usual way to lay ghosts is to do what they want you to do. Which may be said to beg the question. Dear Lizzie, tell us where your treasure is buried! We've searched everywhere for it. Now we appeal to you. We want so badly to become an Art. Please show us the way.



Why Stories Are Changed

By Cecil B. De Mille
Director General, Famous-Players-Lasky Corporation

WHY purchase the screen rights of a stage play or novel and then radically alter it in its photoplay form?

Perhaps because I have done just that—purchased a famous play or story and "altered" it—several times in the past, I have been asked the foregoing question an untold number of times.

The answer is two-fold, and it is always the same: Because, in the first place, neither stage play nor novel can be transferred to the screen without making radical changes in it; and secondly, because there is not enough good original material to select from.

Critics who denounce the producer for altering a stage play in transferring its theme to the screen fail to take into consideration the fact that the stage play and the photoplay are two absolutely separate and distinct forms of dramatic art. They are akin, if you like, but they are not alike.

The stage playwright can convey his ideas by the spoken word. He can permit his characters to sit perfectly still and just talk. They may say tremendously interesting things. They may bare the innermost emotional secrets. But if you photograph that, you have a pretty picture of people moving their faces—and nothing more.

The screen play conveys its message by pantomime. What may be said with a dozen spoken lines on the stage may require a dozen scenes on the screen. And every one of those scenes must register thought; they cannot be mere pictures any more than the playwright's lines may be just words.

But the important thing is that the two forms of dramatic art reach their public through different mediums. It is no more possible to transcribe a stage play to the screen without making many changes in its form than it is to dramatize a novel without altering its literary shape. The spoken play is as different from the screen play as they both are different from the novel.

Very often the playwright depends largely upon the brilliancy of his dialogue to "put over" his idea. Now, dialogue is interesting and entertaining, but you cannot photograph dialogue.

The fact that so far in the history of the motion picture industry but few great original writers have been developed makes the producer dependent upon the ideas of men and women in other fields of literary work. We must turn to the novelists and the stage dramatists simply because it is impossible to get enough original material.

The youth of the photoplay art is in a large measure responsible for the fact that to date we have not succeeded in developing a sufficient number of photodramatists to meet the demand. By "photodramatists" I mean men and women of sufficient ability, training and genius to write original screen plays that will rank with contemporary stage plays. And when I use the word "genius" in describing the potential scenario writer I mean it in the sense of an "infinite capacity for hard work," as some one has quite rightly said.

It is the idea that counts, as in everything else. Form is important but it does not matter if it lacks the spark of life that is a real idea.

We shall get these original ideas in the very near future. The time is not far distant when the screen will be able to boast of an original literature worthy of rank with the best in other literary fields.

This can only be brought about by the development of original writers. A start has been made. Today many earnest students are beginning to study the needs of the screen. These pioneers are mastering the mechanics of their art just as a musician studies and practices interminably in order that he may perfect his technique. And it is to these student-writers that the literary future of the photoplay must be confided. From their ranks must come the Shakespeares and Molieres of the screen.

What Ails the Pictures?

By Ellis Parker Butler

PERHAPS nothing ails the pictures. It may be that the producers have discovered exactly what the people want and that pictures are now perfect. Why does there seem to be a falling off in attendance if that is true?

Being an egotistic sort of son-of-a-gun I have my own theories. I go to see pictures with great reluctance; they seem to me, as a rule, shoddy stuff and not up to my own simple intelligence. I feel that I am insulting myself when I take myself to a motion picture theatre. Why do I feel thusly? Am I a nut or am I sane?

My notion is that the producers have found what the people want and are giving it to them, and that that is what a fool would do. Their logic is as full of holes as Swiss cheese. The truth is that people don't want what they want; they want what they don't want. In simple words, such as even scenario writers and motion picture producers can understand, the public sees something and likes it; it is new, pleasing, satisfying. It thinks it wants more of it. It calls for more of it. Everybody turns in and tries to give it what it thinks it wants. But it does not like it. It gets sick at the stomach.

"The Motion Picture Fallacy"

Says Ellis Parker Butler—author of "Pigs Is Pigs," "The Jack-Knife Man" and the "Philo Gubb, Detective" stories, all of which have been screened—"is that to give the public what it wants one must give it more of what it liked once."

Here is the axiom: The public always thinks it wants more of what it has liked; what it wants in fact is something as new and amusing and satisfying as what it liked.

The motion picture fallacy is that to give the public what it wants one must give it more of what it liked once. Now, in one sense, that is true; in another it is not. Because one picture—say Rex Beach's "Barrier"—pleased the public it does not follow that every writer and producer can please the public by eternally doing the "Barrier" kind of picture over and over again. No; the things that make pictures big hits with audiences are originality and brains. The first "big" picture—say "Cabiria"—makes a big hit. It surprises and amazes. Someone had brains to plan a whale of a production. The public loves it a while. Imitations come in floods. The public, remembering "Cabiria," thinks it wants that sort of picture. It does not. What it wants at just that moment is a quiet, inexpensive, sweet pastoral comedy—Pickford stuff, perhaps.

Somebody does a Pickford pastoral at about that time, by mistake. It is loved by the public. The public thinks it wants that sort of picture, and it is given dozens of them. But that is not what the public really wants; it only thinks it wants it. What it wants is something entirely new and different.

If a wife, because her husband simply loved the kippered herring she gave him one day for dinner, proceeded to give him kippered herring forever more, he would kill her. The successful wife is the one who has brains and uses them once in awhile. The motion pictures are being kipper-herringed to death and extinction because the public thinks it loves kippered herring and the producers are fools enough to believe the public knows what it wants.

The great trouble with the motion pictures right now is that they are "motion-pictury." Conventions have come into being, studio habits have arisen, the cook thinks she has to put vanilla into every dish. Isn't it the truth that the highest praise a motion picture can have today is "It isn't a bit like a motion picture"? There is almost always a flavor of "And hand in hand they walked into the dawn of a new day" or some other purely motion-pictury con-

vention. The successful pictures will be those that get rid of this.

I can't read many novels; I'm a busy man. My wife will read one, and when I say, "How is it?" she may answer, "Just another novel." I don't read that one. I don't go to see movies because they are nearly always "Just another motion picture."

It seems to me true that while immense money is put into pictures and costly casts are given them, the brains—such as they are—go to the matters of detail and technique. I wish you would think back over the books that have been successes in the last twenty years. Not one has been like any other. Unless one thing—unless written by the same author.

What folly the picture producers are exhibiting! What childish blindness the scenario writers are showing! A picture by Rupert Hughes (let us say) makes a hit. It does so because it has a bright particular Rupert Hughes quality. That quality is tucked away under Rupert Hughes' hat, and is his own and no other man's, and yet the producers immediately seek to have Bill Nye and Aristophanes and Harriet Beecher Stowe, each with his or her own particular quality, turn in and do Rupert Hughes' sort of writing. It can't be done.

And no one man—except a giant—can do good work and keep doing exactly the same sort of writing. He must everlastingly beat his breast and tear his hair for big, burning originality. Brains! Brains! Brains! And the motion picture industry seems to be trying to do business on dollars, imitation ideas and heads full of antiseptic cotton. It needs a few lunatics and hydrophobic pups

Honestly, I could weep to consider the motion picture art of today, it seems so hopelessly tangled in ineptitudity. So few of its writers seem to have the daring to use all their brains at one time—to throw the whole brain-panful into a piece of work as if they never expected to do another. The brains are doled out so grudgingly—as if brain did not spring anew and more copious for being recklessly poured out! And if a man does a new, big thing, some myopic continuity man—who is jammed full of memories of "how Griffith did it"—goes at the story and "standardizes it." And if he does leave it somewhat sweet and living and original the director directs it *a la* Something that once was a hit, and the poor sticks of actors have their precious little originality shouted out of them, and the best thing any writer could do comes out as a regular blah-blah motion picture.

The rush of excellent authors into the art of writing for the pictures is a good thing; it has probably saved the pictures from a worse state than even now seems to await it. But that is not enough. I do feel sick when I hear that "So-and-So, whose book was such a hit, is going to write for the motion pictures." It seems to mean that he is going to try to do what the producer thinks the public wants. What I want to hear is "So-and-So is going to write a cracking good story without a thought of motion picture production, and the movies can take it or leave it." That story, done by a producer with brains, is what the public wants.

My dear friend, the motion pictures are in a rut. They are sat upon by a constantly growing incubus of conventions. A fiction magazine that proceeded to print made-to-measure stories as the producers print made-to-measure films would not last six weeks. Unless, behold! it had out a corps of two thousand solicitors forcing the magazine on the public. And that is what the magazines have. And it is what the motion pictures have not.

The motion pictures, not being able to button-hole the public into buying annual subscriptions, must put brains into the business. There are plenty of brains—you scenario writers have them, I imagine—but you are not allowed to use them. You have to do "what the public wants" and, unfortunately, that is just exactly what the public does not want.

The trouble with motion pictures is that they are "motion pictures," and the whole industry seems in a conspiracy to prevent us from forgetting it. I hope the time will soon come when a book with a fine flavor can go through the mill and show on the screen with all its fine flavor preserved, instead of reeking with Bouquet de Picture. That a book or scenario cannot is at the root of the whole trouble. What is the use of doing anything fine when Essence of Dawn of a New Day is going to be smeared all over it anyway?

Well, let us not despair. With hearts undaunted let us face the future bravely and perhaps soon we may, hand in hand, go forth (silhouette—orange tint on film—slow music) into the dawn of a new and happier day. Oh, slush!

The Child and the Movie

By Beulah Marie Dix

ALL of us who read the *Photodramatist* have seen movies, and many of us have written them. All of us, too, have seen children, or so I supposed until I read what pro-censorship people have to say about them. Then I had to hold my throbbing head and ask myself: Have I ever seen a child?

Where do they come from, these pale, sweet-faced beings, who believe that the angels bring little babies, or else the doctor magics them out of his black bag? In what cloistered nursery have they been nourished? Who have been their playmates, that they have never heard the word "divorce"? Of what make are their parents and their elder brothers and their sisters that they have never yet discovered that grown folk kiss and court?

I used the word "nursery" in sheer perplexity and no doubt inaccurately but —what *is* their age, these elusive children, in whose outraged name the motion picture is to be leveled to the *Little Prudy* books? Apparently they may be any age from six to sixteen. But in that case a sharp and scientific division must be made among them, for a genuine child, between the years of six and twelve, is as different in his needs from an adolescent, between twelve and sixteen, as an adolescent is different from an adult. But dull sciences like psychology and pedagogy have little to do with the mental processes of the censorship fan, and the child he (or she) continues to hurl at our devoted heads is ageless and sexless—but *not* dateless. For the child for whom the movies shall be made safe by the simple process of annihilation belongs in the Victorian age of English fiction (fiction, mark me, not fact) and his spiritual and literary forbears are Little Lord Fauntleroy and Elsie Dinsmore.

Not long ago a Los Angeles paper published a beautifully written article in which the writer, an honored son of the Southland, bewailed the tragic fact that the lovely innocence of childhood, such as he had known and marked with reverence in earlier, happier years, has been utterly lost. Sadly I conceded the truth of his statement, as I thought of the blighted bodies and sullied minds of millions of little beings upon the war-racked Continent of Europe. But no! It was not of European children that he spoke, nor was it War that he indicted. It is the American child whose innocence has been destroyed, and the fell destroyer (don't cheer, boys, the poor fellows are dying!) is the Movie.

Having an American child of my own, I was rather disconcerted to learn that, automatically, as it were, she had lost her chance to be innocent. So I sat down and reflected on my own happy childhood, before the blight of the movie fell upon the land, in order to compare my early state with hers. I was born of 100% American stock. We looked down shudderingly on "foreign" children, who lived in the factory cottages, ten people in two rooms, and consequently "knew all about everything." I was brought up in a lovely historic New England village, with elm-shaded streets. No mad electric cars, in those days, automobiles undreamed of, a telephone in a private house a phenomenon, and a telegram never sent except in case of murder or sudden death. According to the Californian writer's thesis, I ought to have tasted the dewy sweets of innocent childhood, unspotted from the movies—oughtn't I?

Innocent! To this day I wince when I recall the words that dimpled childish hands

The Children of Yesteryears

Did they know of divorce, adultery, illegitimacy? Did they believe doctors brought babies in black bags? Beulah Marie Dix, of the Famous Players-Lasky Scenario Staff, answers these questions wisely — and humorously.

had pencilled on the walls of the school outbuildings, and I wish I knew how to pluck out of my mind certain never to be forgotten rhymes that older playmates taught me.

Divorce? Oh, yes! We had heard of divorce, so much so that I used to wonder seriously whether I should go with my father or my mother when our happy family broke up, as happy families seemed to do.

Adultery? I did not know the word till my grandmother set me to learn the Ten Commandments, but from the gossip of the neighborhood—lowered voices naturally make a child prick up its ears!—I knew of the fact for which it is a name before I was ten years old.

Illegitimacy? Of course we knew that older people hugged and kissed and courted, as inevitably as we knew that night followed day, and winter followed autumn, and we knew that sometimes, without the formality of marriage, unwanted babies came—"little angels," was the euphemistic expression of the Auntie Bogarts of our particular Main Street.

Did we believe that the doctor brought the baby in his black bag? Not many of us, after we had kept pet dogs and cats and rabbits, and after our best friends had achieved infant brothers and sisters. I knew one girl in our little circle who did honestly believe at ten years old the doctor and black bag fable—or said she did. None of us undeceived her. It may be a mere coincidence that that one little girl was the only one of that small group of "nice" American children who in later life, to use the phrase of Main Street, "went wrong."

In our Union there is one wise and powerful state where a wise and powerful Board of Censors has decreed that no scene may be shown in a motion picture where a young wife sews on little garments for the expected baby. "Too suggestive," they say, "and to preserve the innocence of childhood, etc., etc." I wonder what those censors would have made of us, three little New England girls of thirty years ago, sitting under a lilac bush with our dollies, and solemnly pretending, as we so often did, to prepare wardrobes for the wax babies that a little later (probably after luncheon) would be fetched from the playroom and added to our family circle. (I had two girl dolls and one boy baby doll. I suppose he got born, on an average, once a month.)

I am going perhaps tediously into these details of my childhood, not because of sheer senilescence, but to furnish data for ensuing questions. Were we depraved, my little friends and myself? According to the happy ideals of childhood held up by boards of censors and their advocates, we must have been, for we evidently knew (even thirty years ago) all sorts of things of which the Child for whom the Movie must be made Safe has never heard. But according to fact and experience, we do not seem to have been depraved, for we have most of us grown up into average decent citizenesses, with average decent offspring. Moreover, the games we played, the questions we asked, the information we picked up, seem all to have been duplicated in the lives of most of my female contemporaries whom I have questioned. So instead of being depraved, we seem to have been normal youngsters. And if we were normal, then what, in Heaven's name, is the Ideal Child, the bugaboo that the Censor holds up before the director and the writer? To say he is an abnormality is to speak with self-restraint.

My native state is Massachusetts, not Missouri, but I still am waiting to be shown that the modern child has been injured in his morals or his manners by the movies. Of course, morals and manners unquestionably have altered in the last twenty-five, and more particularly in the last five years. But to lay this alteration solely at the door of the movies is to write one's self down a fanatic. Other agencies, as powerful as the movies, have done more than their bit to alter our former standards. In the last years, as it is sometimes needful to remind the pro-censorship party, we have lived through a great war, and one need read only a little more than elementary history to realize that a coarsening of manners and loosening of morals follows as inevitably upon a period of war as blood flows where the knife cuts. We have also in the last decade seen the incredible increase of automobiles. The connection between certain forms of vice and the automobile is far more demonstrable than any connection that has yet been worked out between crime and the movies. Yet because some foolish and vicious boys and girls have found automobiles of service in their foolish and vicious courses, no moralist has yet suggested that we older folk should scrap our speedsters and travel henceforth in kiddie cars and perambulators. Silly as the last sentence sounds, it is exactly the course that is suggested when we are urged to stop making pictures for adults and consider only the capacity of the youngest child and the feeblest moron in our huge audiences.

I don't see how pictures can be made exclusively or even primarily for children, as we are so often urged to make them, because, in the first place, the kind of child the censorship fans talk about is so exceptional as to be negligible. (We are dealing with facts, not theories—with children as they are, not as some elderly bachelor uncle thinks they ought to be.) In the second place to write for children, that is, for people under the age of sixteen, means to write for two distinct classes, children and adolescents; and not both classes taken together, let alone each taken separately, as they should be, are large enough to support specialized films, made to meet their peculiar needs. In the third place, there are pictures enough turned out that are suitable for children, who are old enough to see pictures.

At this point the question of the harassed mother or the challenging clubwoman is always: Tell me where these pictures are—tell us where to find them?

The answer is almost too simple: approach pictures just as you approach books. Surely no sane woman seriously believes that every book published is fit for her child to read, or that, if it isn't, it ought to be. She does not buy "Mlle. de Maupin" or "Human Bondage" or, for that matter, "Tom Jones," for her ten-year-old daughter, nor on the other hand, perhaps, if she is one kind of mother, does she buy for her children certain popular novels, even though their sales have mounted into the hundreds of thousands and their pages drip with "uplift." Yet if she *is* a sane woman, she hardly clamors for the publishers to cease publishing and the authors to cease writing a thousand books like the above-mentioned that have given and will continue to give, in their varying degrees, delight and stimulation to the grown folk to whom they are addressed. If this forbearance and common sense is exercised by the average woman in regard to books, why not in regard to pictures?

In selecting a book for her child, the careful mother looks first at the name of the author, and next at the publisher's imprint. In like manner, when she selects a picture for her child's entertainment, she would do well to look at the name of the star and the name of the producing firm. Some stars distinctly appeal—or should appeal—to adults only. Others appeal to boys and girls from seven years old to seventy. Some producers and directors have made their names synonymous with ultra-sophisticated entertainment, others with homespun offerings that all ages may witness without detriment. Don't send your child to "any old picture," and then, if he stumbles on something meant for adults, condemn all pictures and demand their extirpation! Know the stars and know the producers and, furthermore—read the reviews of a picture before you go to it! Most of the trade papers give full summaries of forthcoming productions, and with a little effort you can find out in advance what story is to be unfolded in the picture to which you take your child. Of course this does entail a little effort, but one's responsibility to one's offspring does not cease in the hour when he first learns to drink milk from a cup.

I'm quite proud of the suggestions incorporated in that last paragraph, but I'm bound to confess that when I pass them on to mothers who want something done about the movies, the effect is disappointing. Of course they *all* do *themselves* what I have advised, but they point out with great pathos that the poor women in the tenement district haven't the ability to protect their children, so a lot of hard-worked censors must draw salaries in order to do it for them. I take off my hat always to Altruism, but isn't it strange that people who don't get fussed up over the prohibitive price of the milk that the tenement child so often cannot afford to drink, or the scanted cubic feet of air in his sleeping room, or the sanitation of his school house, or the perils of life and limb that he runs, for instance, in crossing the traffic infested streets of our own Los Angeles, get so distressed over the quality of the entertainment that is offered him?

After all, is the entertainment that the modern child gets so much worse than what we used to get in that golden age of innocence, my childhood, to which I will for the last time recur? We had no movies then. "Nice" children went to Sunday School entertainments. The ones who weren't so nice—and the nice ones if they could manage it—went to the traveling shows that came to our village. I didn't manage it often. I missed "Ten Nights in a Bar-room." But I stood and gloated over the colored lithographs that set forth crime and horror to match—yea, and better—the three sheeters of any modern movie. I did get to see "Uncle Tom's Cabin." You who deplore the vulgarities of the slapstick picture comedy, did you ever enjoy the chaste refine-

ments of a real old-time "Tommer" with two Topsies and two funny Lawyer Marks? Failing a show and its sheeters, we could always read the first page of the dime novels that hung in rows in the stationer's window, or perhaps we could secrete a copy of the Family Herald or a Laura Jean Libbey novel, and read it in the wood shed. Then, too, I personally was fortunate in knowing a dear old silver-haired lady who read—the Police Gazette! You who are interested in the oddities of New England, explain it as you will. She was old, she was silver-haired, she was kind and good, as all old ladies should be—and she read the Police Gazette, and papered the walls of her summer kitchen with its pink pages. I used to sit on her kitchen table and read complete details (I could recite some of them now) of robbery, murder, violence, and torture. And I was what passed as a sheltered child. O tempora, O mores, O happy days of innocence!

After all, the young of the race are as the race was when it was young. Have you ever delved into folk-song? If so, you know that the ballads which our ancestors (of all ages and both sexes) sang down to a hundred years ago, in some remote places, the ballads that were their entire popular literature, the only outgrowth of their spontaneous fancy, were (with the exception of the tales of Robin Hood, the original "good bad man") like the movies that today are condemned by the censors, tales of *Sex* and *Violence*. And from the age of ten or twelve years old up to the day of our death sex and violence are the topics—as witness our eagerly devoured newspapers in these recent days—that will always interest us, censors or no censors. To quote Bret Harte, in a justly famous poem, "it hadn't ought to be," but eternally and to the confusion of the champions of ideal children and of ideal men and women, *"it is!"*



Fail Us Not

By J. R. McCarthy

Little old woman in Austerlitz,
Mouthing crabbed hunchback in Tokio,
Sunny-haired Viking giant in Christiana—
How shall you know in your hearts
What manner of men we are?
How shall you know the dreams and the hopes
That urge us and drive us in these wide States?

Our poets sing in an unknown tongue,
Our cities to you are dream cities,
And our prairies are far and far.

But wait,
Woman, hunchback, giant—
The dreams of our city-dwellers we shall send you,
The hearts of our mountaineers,
The hopes of the dwellers on our prairies,
The loves of our fishermen,
The victories and the failures of our scientists
On the tops of our mountains—
All these we shall send you in words that you understand,
In the universal language of pictures.

Fail us not,
Woman, hunchback, giant—
Tell us in the same fair language
Of the broken mother in Austerlitz,
Of the strange new days in Tokio,
Of the slim maiden whose hair is a golden net
To snare the Viking gulls!



The Demand for "Originals"

By Bradley King

"I WANT original stories!" It would surprise the skeptical public if I should tell the number of times that I have heard those words lately. From the producer with a half dozen units working under his supervision, to the one staking everything on a single company, comes the same call, and its insistence after many weary months of "Has it been published?" is worthy of consideration.

Just why is the demand for original screen stories, when books are just as numerous, magazines just as flourishing, plays just as successful? The answer—to my mind—is simple. Producers, big and little, are discovering the old truth that it is much harder to fit a square peg into a round hole, than to fit a round one. In other words, a story written from a motion picture angle, built up and sequenced for interpretation through the screen, is not only simpler and easier to *produce,* but nine times out of ten infinitely more pleasing and acceptable to the audience.

There are very few plays, books or published stories that can be transferred intact to the screen. Time, money and effort must be spent in "revamping"—for the Motion Picture is an art in itself, and its medium of appeal is entirely different from any other. The things that captivate in a published story, or in a spoken play, are not the things that captivate on the screen—so only the certain bits that can be transferred are of any use to the producer. The general public does not understand this and is disappointed in not seeing their favorite book picturized just as they had read it. Truth is, that if it were, they would probably fall asleep watching it, or else be entirely out of sympathy with the characters on the screen.



BRADLEY KING

Miss King has written some of the best original screen stories of the past year. She is a member of Thomas H. Ince's all-star scenario staff. Her most recent "original" is "Jim," now being filmed at the Ince Studios. Miss King says: "The demand for original stories will always exceed the supply."

Take, for example, "Lying Lips," adapted from the novel, "Magic Life," by May Edington. The novel opened in Canada, and here and there were given glimpses of what Nance Abbott's life had been in England, of the reason for her visit to the Canadian wilderness, and enough was told us to at least let us understand why she refused to marry the man she loved because he was poor. But no amount of titling or of later explanation, could have condoned her refusal in the eyes of the audience who saw her only through the screen—they had to be shown. To do that it became necessary to build up a whole English sequence. It was made up out of whole cloth, but her environment, her mode of living, the artificiality that was all she knew, were shown in such dramatic incidents, that later, when we saw the poverty-stricken surroundings of the man she loved in Canada—we saw them through

her eyes, and didn't blame her half so much for hesitating.

Again, "Magic Life" was written during the war, and the hero joined the English Army and was sent to France, etc. This all had to be eliminated, because the war was over when the motion picture was being made, and the public no longer cared to see on the screen the things they were trying to forget. A new set of conditions had to be evolved, a new reason for his leaving Canada had to be formulated, a new ending had to be built up—but fortunately, Miss Edington had a plot strong enough to stand all these changes and additions and still hold its own.

Some stories are not so lucky. I refer to one of my own, which appeared in a magazine and was adapted to the screen. I went to the preview—it was incidentally my first preview of one of my own stories—and I wept copiously throughout the performance. Not at the acting or the direction—they were splendid—but the story was not my story—and when I was speaking to the director afterwards, I learned to my surprise, that he had not seen either the theme or the point of my story the way they had seemed to me! The thing that had seemed to him wonderful and dramatic—that had caused him to purchase and produce the story, to me was a side issue of minor importance.

I was shocked—but since I have been "adapting" I've probably done the same thing myself—and there is one of the biggest drawbacks in transferring to the screen material not written for presentation that way. The scenarist has his own point-of-view, his own angles of conception. He can't help putting these into his adaptation—everyone brings to the reading of a book a certain amount of his own temperament and psychology. The director has his angles, too, and it sometimes happens, as in the case of my story, that the real theme isn't the theme at all to them.

I have in mind now one well-known book that has had adaptations made of it by several of the best scenario-writers there are. I read them, and wondered at the diversity of opinion and impressions—then I read the book, and far—very far—be it from me to attempt to convey, via the screen, the message given through the written pages. Why? Because the theme—vital, strong, urgent as it is, is taboo by the censors. Change the theme, you change this plot—and changing this plot, you change the book entirely, and haven't half as good a story as if the book were discarded and an original screen story written.

This little Censorship business twists many a story and book, because it is now decreed "Thou shalt read—but not see (on the screen)." No matter how great the message conveyed, some one with a long face and a short mind might not approve and it would be snipped out regardless—so it is omitted from the beginning.

All these drawbacks are not encountered in the original screen story. To begin with, all good little scenario writers have one eye on the censor all the time, and then, expecting no other interpretation than through the screen, the story is built up or restricted to fit its possibilities. The story is there—told in action—stripped of the glamor of beautiful words and descriptions, of pages of clever conversation. It is the *picture*—as it will be shown—and the producer can visualize it as he reads—can see its strong and weak points, can grasp its theme. The continuity writer and the director can do the same. The story stands or falls on its screening possibilities alone, and the chances of going wrong, or of getting a "white elephant" are slim. Too many books and published stories are misleading. They hold one enthralled, but when it comes to putting them on the screen, one realizes sadly, that the thing that captivated refuses to be picturized.

It all comes back to the same thing—and it is the answer to the present call for original stories—the Motion Picture is an art by itself. It must have its own distinct expression, it must have stories written just for its interpretation. The biggest screen successes will be from original screen stories. They are bound to be—it is the only logical thing. Regardless of fabulous prices paid for the picture rights to plays and books, I would be willing to wager that financially, and in the public's mind, the adaptations have not equalled some of the original screen works of C. Gardner Sullivan and Jeanie MacPherson.

I mention them because, maybe, they are best-known, but they are only two of the many who are devoting their talents to the screen. The number is daily increasing, but to my way of thinking, the demand will always exceed the supply—for the Motion Picture business, along the Production line has been given new impetus, and hand in hand with it move the Story—the original screen story—that will give to the public the quality of picture they have come to expect.

Writing Slapstick Comedies

By Harry R. Brand

AESOP gave civilization its first Fable. George Ade started a fad 'way back in '95—and he's still at it with tremendous success—of Fables in Slang. And now comes the Twentieth Century Fable—as those who harbor rejected comedy scenarios will testify—an aspiring young author has sold a script to the Buster Keaton Company, and what's more he's been paid for it and it'll be produced.

The full significance of this Fable cannot be appreciated by the layman. But to those "behind the scenes," that is to say, the humorists who peruse, in an effort to find something that smacks of originality, the many manuscripts that reach a comedy company during a year, this is a hundred per cent dyed-in-the-wool Fable, the ones of .Aesop and Ade being non-fiction when mentioned in the same breath. To those who strive to sell their brain products to an organization that films laugh provokers this announcement allows a ray of sunshine to filter in.

But, judging by the caliber of stories and the utter unfamiliarity of the authors with the manner in which comedies are produced and the ingredients needed for successful laughtivities, it may be months before another script is received that will be acceptable.

This wholesale returning of scripts from embryo writers can be attributed to many things. First and foremost, of course, is that untrained screen writers have no conception of what photographs. Second, they are minus a sense of humor. cinematically speaking, for what reads "funny" usually proves boresome on the screen. Third, they do not study the personality of the comedian for whom they write. And lastly, they make the fatal error of "going in for story" which is just what comedians try to avoid.

The most successful comedy "scenario" writers are, paradoxical as it may seem, those who cast plot and continuity to the wind and concentrate on "gags." A "gag" is a "funny piece of business" and a series of these make a successful comedy. Comedies are made for "laughing purposes only," and although held together by a well defined thread of a story, they are usually of the slapstick order, but the slapstick must be silver-plated and highly polished and bear the sterling mark in a very convincing form. In other words, the plots of most comedies can be told in a few words, viz: a comedian starts out to go somewhere and has trouble reaching his destination. "Gags," fitting the personality of the star, must follow rapidly, placed so that there will be continual laughter.

Buster Keaton was reared on the stage, being a comedian from childhood. After seventeen years behind the footlights as a comedian he entered the film game, doing a "bit" for Roscoe Arbuckle. His climb has been meteoric; his knowledge of comedy is amazing. Consequently, what he has to say on the question of writing and producing comedies should be studied carefully by those who strive to write for comedians.

Aspiring scenario writers usually have the wrong idea of comedy, according to Buster Keaton.

"It is easier to be serious than funny," Buster said when questioned on the writing and producing as well as the acting of comedies. "The actor in a straight dra-

Says Buster Keaton:

"I recommend those inclined to write slapstick comedies to forego stories and mail in 'funny pieces of business.'" The slapstick comedy market is small and restricted. Very few possess the peculiar knack of writing this 'nonsense' and burlesque stuff. The mature photodramatist usually disdains this field, but the beginner might do well to recall Edwin Schallert's advice in the August PHOTO-DRAMATIST: "No screen writer, I believe, can make any mistake by trying his hand at writing comedies early in his experience. The temptation to stray into bypaths away from pictures is minimized. You cannot put a 'gag' on the screen unless you can visualize its performance."

matic theme seldom carries the whole play on his shoulders. The story itself holds the interest of the audience and the actor must be exceptionally good to make his personality rise above the attention-value of the plot.

"But in comedy, the actor usually is the outstanding feature—the story being negligible or entirely absent from the consciousness of the audience. This should be remembered by those who are writing comedies for the screen.

"Now, merely to see a man's hat broken by the unconscious manouevering of another man's cane ,is not funny. But if the man whose hat is broken is pompous, or plutocratic looking, or if he is a policeman or a person the other fellow cannot afford to affront, the situation usually becomes laughable. But all the while the comedian who thus provokes others must preserve an air of absent-mindedness and blundering decency. He must never seem mischievous —never intentionally destructive nor malicious.

"Dignity, position and intolerance," Buster said continuing, "are always fair targets for comedy laughs. And when the victim refuses to recognize that he is being made ridiculous; when he attempts to preserve his 'front' in the face of it, and then meets with a sudden catastrophe that blasts his dignity to bits, comedy usually is climactic.

"The comedian must maintain throughout a seeming attempt to get out of his troublous situations while keeping his dignity—and never succeeds. The fact that he fails, to me, is the essence of humor.

"I tell these things," Buster said, pausing, "because some of the writers who submit scenarios are not cognizant of these facts. They have, I believe, the wrong idea of comedy, and for that reason their comedies usually are returned.

"The writer must strive to obtain sympathy for his character; that is the all-important factor in comedy. This should be done at the opening, if possible. For instance, he should usually be beaten by an outrageously bigger man. In his clashes with the law, he must meet with abuse of power. If he outwits the police, it must be for something he is wrongly accused of. The crowd's sympathy for the 'under dog' is one of the comedian's prime assets. This, many embryo comedy scenarists overlook. This they must do if they would have their comedies acceptable to a comedian.

"Exaggeration and surprise are two other ingredients for a successful comedy, and writers should intersperse their scenarios with each," the solemn-visaged comedian continued. "Audiences like the grotesque and want to be fooled.

"Comedy, to me, is a serious business. That dictum was laid down years ago. A writer must never have his comedian appear to be saying, 'I guess I'm pretty funny, what?' It is easier to be serious than funny, but fun must be taken seriously to be made funny.

"There you have in a nutshell, what I believe writers should know before attempting to turn out a comedy scenario," the frozen-faced laughmaker added, hesitating for just a second, and then continuing:

"If I were to start out to write a comedy, I wouldn't know how myself. Because, after all, we 'write' more with the camera than with the typewriter. In other words, we have one idea before starting, or perhaps two, say, a start and a finish, and the rest is ad lib.

"When it comes to the making of the comedy—well, that is to me, a sad story," the comedian went on. "A person who would be a successful actor and director in the making of two-reel comedies must have the conscience of a profiteer, the nerve of a bandit and the skill of a counterfeiter.

"The beginner, that is, the one who writes his first comedy," the agile star said with emphasis, "tries to write a continuity so that every move of the comedian is known. This is all right for drama, but for comedy most of the humor is spontaneous, and the best laugh provokers come while the picture is under way. The script is a mere skeleton and a comedian must improvise as he goes along.

"I would suggest, to those who are writing for the comedy-end of motion pictures, that they concentrate on 'gags.' Novelty and originality are essential. We usually get an idea as to what our picture will be, then erect a set and start 'shooting,' improvising as we go along.

"So, I recommend to those who are inclined along comedy-writing lines that they do away with story and just mail in 'funny pieces of business,' and I am sure they will succeed," Buster said. "We want 'gags,' not story."

This Side of Nirvana

By Ted LeBerthon

THE PHOTODRAMATIST needs your co-operation. We have arrived at a period in motion picture history which is causing grave concern. The grounds for this concern are unusual, having to do with the artistic future of the photoplay. The motion picture industry has made more progress than the motion picture art. The industry reeks with money; the art is at a standstill.

It is needless to comment upon the conspicuous cases of notable directors who made better photoplays five years ago than they are making today. Artistic values have declined in proportion—it would seem—to the progress in technique, on all sides. The intensive exploitation of shoddy wares has made for false values; Art has been sacrificed on the altar of Advertising.

The photodramatist has found himself shackled by two major considerations during this recent period of stagnation: the box office and censorship. This state of affairs must be counteracted.

The Photodramatist is devoted to the interests of screen writers and students of screen writing. Now, here is an opportunity for realizing the truth of this, and of extending your co-operation:

Write for *The Photodramatist.* We need the student viewpoint just as much as we do the professional's, for the cinema needs an infiltration of new blood, needs the vision of those who will be the screen writers of the next five, in some cases twenty-five, years.

Those of us who are today writing for the screen will some day cease our professional activities; this day may come to some of us with the decline of mental faculties—to others with the closing of our earthly careers.

You screen writers of the future, from you will come photoplay masterpieces such as none have created thus far! And today, your visions and ideals set down on the printed page, will prove stimulating and inspiring to those now writing for the luminous square.

With the hour of the "original" already at hand may come a turning point in cinema history. It is an hour for honesty to have its say, for new values to be wrought.

Let every student of screen writing think of the part he wants to play towards the advancement of the motion picture art; let each one express his or her ideal, set it down on paper, and mail the article in to *The Photodramatist.* Through your composite ideas we will clarify many problems, and hasten the progress of the motion picture Art.

New Horizons

In the average play or photoplay, the problem or problems confronting the characters are solved before the final curtain or fadeout. In this way the audience is enabled to depart at the end of the performance or presentation without taking away any measure of perplexity.

The photoplay dealing with the utterly obvious, with all its elements sharply defined, and with a "satisfactory" ending which is a complete solution, may be relished by the majority of people, but I have a sneaking hunch that a few screen tales a la "The Lady or the Tiger" might successfully woo a populace essentially changeable and capricious.

Of course, as far as artistic qualifications go, the higher type of photoplay will be the one wherein no attempt is made to solve any problems; where the very ending is vague, nebulous or even dimly, intangibly terrible! Consider the feelings of an audience after witnessing a photoplay which terminates with a young man and a young woman on the brink of a moral precipice, in an entanglement which allows of no extrication—except—and here the very faintest breath of hope could be allowed to lightly stir within them—reflected in their eyes or in a sudden gesture, as the scene fades into the word "Finis."

What conjecturing could be possible around family firesides! Such a photoplay would be as Life itself, always unfinished, always incomplete. It would linger in people's memories, it would invite discussion, provoking wide comment and wider attendance. The problem has been transferred

from the shoulders of the characters on the screen to the audience. It is theirs to ponder, to wonder if——.

In all great works of art there are blurry depths, horizons beyond horizons, some strange, remote element that does not exhaust interest at one seeing or hearing. I have yet to see the photoplay capable of arousing the uneasiness of spirit which results from a reading of certain books in which there is a shadowy feel and movement towards the unknowable—or even the unthinkable! In anything obvious one is consciously aware of the finite hemming-in. In a work of art where the vein of thought reaches into the profound, there is always a dimly suggested beyondness, in realms of rarefied beauty—or ugliness.

In the third and final episode of "While New York Sleeps," which Fox produced, there was the terrible figure of the old paralytic—a choked and smouldering volcano, suggesting sinister possibilities—possibilities that were never realized, to the everlasting artistic glory of that celluloid fragment of Life. But the old man was ever an inscrutable, potential force—his very rigid, fixed attitude and the power of his intense presence constituting a nervous, sustained suspense. Here was the life of Everyman, never quite accomplishing, always on the brink of a miracle, but always eventually baffled, an impotent insect in a seething immensity.

Let us hope that the idea originated by Marshall Neilan in the inception of "Bits of Life"—that of introducing one strange, unusual or tragic story in a chain of five distinct stories, the other four representing romance, comedy, adventure, melodrama—will spread, opening up an endless vista of subtler art expression for screen writers whose imaginations seek new horizons.

One Remedy for Censorship

The world is ever seeking new equations; whether things progress, retrogress, or stand still is a much mooted problem—but new balances, new equations are ever the order of things.

I have recently had a vague hunch that perhaps what is wrong with the Movies is the presence within its ranks of people who, while apparently opposed to censorship and things Dr. Briegleb and others stand for, are actually of the same essence. Therefore, when show-downs come, they wilt before such "divines." And why is this? Probably because they are in accord "way down deep" with what these reformers stand for in most things—therefore what little force they bring to bear on the points of difference is largely neutralized.

The battleground right along has been in the realm of morality and immorality. On these grounds the advocates of censorship have all the advantage, because a "bigoted" man sees almost anything beyond his horizon as "immoral."

All ideas of morality and immorality are arbitrary, and there is no "solid" or sound ground for discussion. Any such ideal as tolerance springs from a recognition of the unmoral, the beyond-moral plane of existence and thought. What the movies need is an infiltration of Paganism, in the interests of vigor, imagination, and humor. Apostles of the unmoral are not concerned with either pandering to sex instincts or to removing sex; they are concerned with faithfulness in the portrayal of episodes and incidents from life—in correct psychology, in the exact tracing and placing of reactions, motives, impulses.

There can be no tolerance where there is a monopolization of the God-idea, where a man's highest glory is conceived to lie in his ability to convert other men to his modus of thinking.

I do not believe it at all advisable that the cinema should be completely Paganized; too many people whose tastes are on a different plane attend motion picture theatres. Furthermore, most producers, directors and writers in this country are probably not in accord with my views. Still I believe a touch of Paganism would be of artistic benefit, and that such words as moral and immoral should be taken with a grain of salt. This last for the sake of tolerance.

What to Read

Several articles have appeared in recent issues of magazines, in which authorities urged beginners in screen writing to read the popular magazines and best selling novels in order to gain an understanding of popular taste. I cannot subscribe to this. It seems like wandering in a circle, with no possible progress. I think every screen writer, student or professional, should thoroughly study the screen, but for its artistic possibilities as well as its commercial possibilities. Students whose mental pabulum consists in reading the works of mediocre fictionists will become saturated with the flavor of mediocrity. In fact, most beginners write so shallowly that they should study the master story-tellers, for their thoughts, their deeper understanding of life.

(Continued on Page 38)

Gossip Street

From Hollywood Boulevard to Times Square

Mrs. Andrews' Story

Lambert Hillyer, director of most of William S. Hart's screen plays, has been selected by Thomas H. Ince to direct "Finding Home," an original by Gertrude Nelson Andrews.

Will Rogers at Lasky's

Will Rogers is playing the male lead in "Ek," an original story by Walter Woods and A. B. Barringer.

Wanda's Next

An original screen story by John Blackwood, the continuity for which was written by Violet Clark, is scheduled as Wanda Hawley's next production.

By Winifred Dunn

Winifred Dunn has written an original called "Stranded" for Gareth Hughes at Metro.

A Staff of Celebrities

Vernon Hoagland, managing editor of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation's advisory bureau, now has a force of skilled photodramatists under his direction which will compare favorably with any of the larger studio staffs.

The advisory bureau now boasts of fourteen men and women, all experts in the art of photoplay construction, dramatic technique and dramatic criticism.

The following are listed among the members of this department: Miss Marian Wightman, author of Robert Edeson's recent starring vehicle, "Peter;" Charles Wilson, an eminently successful screen writer; Miss Marguerite Houghton, English stage favorite and photoplaywright, and Mrs. Herman Whittaker, celebrated poetess and erstwhile member of the Goldwyn scenario staff.

Family Note

The R. Cecil Smiths are happily domiciled in Culver City. These prolific writers have a long string of screen successes to their credit. Keep it up!

Clawson at "U"

Elliott J. Clawson has been added to the staff of scenario writers at Universal City.

Classic Cinematographers

"The Vaqueros," a camera study of Clarence Burton and George Fields as they appeared in Cecil B. de Mille's production, "Fool's Paradise," won high praise and a place in the twelfth annual Salon of Photography held in the galleries of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colors in London, according to word received by the artist, James N. Doolittle of the Lasky studio photographic staff.

Five of Doolittle's camera studies won places in this exclusive exhibition and of these "The Vaqueros" won special mention from the jury of artists, sculptors and photographers who pass upon exhibits.

"The Vaqueros" shows Clarence Burton and George Fields as Mexican vaqueros.

"Kisses" by June Mathis

Harry Myers has gone back to Metro and is playing with Alice Lake in "Kisses" from June Mathis' scenario.

Says Grace Kingsley:

And now they're advertising Cecil De Mille's newest picture as follows: "Saturday Night—Not a Bathing Picture."

Egan Buys "Original"

Patrick Calhoun has been engaged by Frank Egan to make the first picture to be released under the Egan banner. The original story and scenario was written by Will N. Fox.

Wedding Bells

Anthony Paul Kelly, Los Angeles scenarist and dramatist, author of "Three Faces East" and other stage plays, and Miss Grace Canary of New York City were married the other day at the Municipal building in Manhattan by Michael J. Cruise, city clerk. Mr. Kelly has written many successful scenarios, having been writing for the moving pictures since he was 18. He is 26 and is dean of the Friars' Club in New York.

Says Clark Irvine:

Sophie Wachner, who is responsible for Goldwyn's gowns, is in New York with her style note-book. Higher or lower?

Scenarist Now Producer

One of the greatest dance hall scenes ever used in a motion picture is to be staged tomorrow at the Fine Arts studios for important episodes in "Man's Law and God's," the first independent Finis Fox

Production. More than 200 players will be used. The dance hall has been built to duplicate an amusement place such as would be found in an out-of-the-way trading post in the far north of Canada. Because of the great number of people involved, Director Finis Fox is planning to use two days to make the scenes. A number of assistant directors will be used. Jack Livingston plays the leading role in this story and Ethel Shannon plays opposite. Fox wrote the story.

Rex Taylor Is Right

Harry Beaumont's success as a director of Viola Dana pictures for Metro has resulted in the signing of a new contract under which he is now filming "Seeing's Believing," an original story by Rex Taylor, which was written expressly for the little star.

Congratulations to Both

Constance Binney is scheduled to start upon an original story by Harvey Thew.

Edington with Goldwyn

A. Channing Edington has been added to the Goldwyn scenario department. "Bare Knuckles," a recent William Russell starring vehicle was from his pen.

Cummings in Wilds

Irving Cummings and his company are enroute for the Canadian Northwest to shoot exteriors for his next production entitled "The Valley of the Missing," an original by Robert Walker.

From Idea to Megaphone

From typewriter to the silver sheet.

Leo Meehan and Henry McCarty, who have written three screen stories for Lester Cuneo and are now finishing a fourth, will direct the picture.

It is "Silver Spurs," a romantic melodrama of California life, and laid in the shadow of one of the old missions.

Of Course

Rita Weiman, whose original photoplay for Goldwyn, "The Grim Comedian," is soon to be released, spent most of her time in the Culver City studios while the picture was being made.

Interesting

Webster Cullison is having Ellis Parker Butler, author of "Pigs is Pigs," write the continuity on the next "Philo Gubb, Deteckative" story, featuring Victor Potel.

Busy Van Loan

H. H. Van Loan, the prolific screen author, is working day and night on a melodrama of sunny Spain. Three of Van Loan's most successful stories have had a foreign locale. They are "The Virgin of Stamboul," a story of Turkey; "The New Moon," a Russian narrative; and "Vive la France."

Rog Wagner "Originals"

Charles Ray's next picture for First National release will be "Smudge," a story by Rob Wagner, who wrote "R. S. V. P." for Mr. Ray.

Mildred versus Mary

Mildred Considine's suit for $10,000 damages against Mary Pickford for leaving her name as scenarist off of Mary's picture, "Through the Back Door," must go to trial. Mary's lawyers demurred in vain on technical points.

Mrs. Norris a Screen Writer

Kathleen Norris, the novelist, has arrived in Los Angeles, to commence work on an original screen story, now titled "The Happiest Night of Her Life." Julien Josephson has been assigned to collaborate with the author on the continuity.

Mrs. Norris is accompanied by her husband, Charles G. Norris, also a novelist of note. His latest work, "Brass," has enjoyed popularity.

New Star

Jane Novak is to star in her own right in the Chester Bennett productions, which have begun work at the Brunton studios. Miss Novak will be supported in her first stellar work by Noah Beery, Frank Glendon, Alfred Hollingsworth and Florence Carpenter.

"The Dice Woman" is the working title of her initial production, an original story from the co-operative pens of J. Grubb Alexander and Harvey Gates.

New Eminent Scenarist

Rudyard Kipling is now to be numbered among the original writers for the screen. At least, according to information received yesterday from Robert Brunton, the great Englishman may be so nominated. Mr. Kipling has just completed an entire scenario based upon his short story, "The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows," which Randolph Lewis is now bringing with him from England for production here at the Brunton lot.

Bradley King's "Jim"

The first production of Thomas H. Ince for the new releasing program of the Associated First National is an original society and western drama from the pen of Bradley King, according to announcement yesterday.

"Jim" is the title of the special, which will include an all-star cast.

She Can Write It

Edna Schley, head of the Edna Schley Productions, Inc., producers of the "Scattergood Baines" stories, has been asked by an Eastern magazine to write an article refuting the declaration of a professor of economy that women are not efficient business executives.

Hail, Kansas!

Wichita, Kan., has broken into the films. A producing company, promoted by M. L. Howe, will begin "shooting" at once under the organization name of "Sunflower Pictures." A studio to cost $380,000 will be constructed, it is said.

World Cinema Exposition

The pagoda picture palace of Tokio, the bizarre film mosque of Constantinople, the Ionic columned screen temple of Athens, the seatless straw-covered photoplay theater of Tahiti and the whaleskin silver sheet auditorium of the Eskimo—these have been suggested as the types of architecture for the various buildings at the world's first motion picture exhibition, which is to be staged in January in Los Angeles.

Film fans of every land know what Los Angeles streets, buildings and surrounding country look like. Now Los Angeles will be given a chance to see just how the product of its greatest industry is purveyed to the populace of the universe.

Dr. Charles Edward Langley, former art director for Douglas Fairbanks, and president of the Ethical Motion Picture Society of America, has charge of designing the exposition buildings for the First Annual Motion Picture Industry Exhibit, as it is to be officially known.

He is enthusiastic over the idea of showing the Angeleno celluloid colony where their faces and figures meet the people of every civilized, some semi-civilized, and a few uncivilized lands.

Plans for the exposition are going ahead at a rapid rate under the direction of Frank B. Davison, director general of the affair, and C. E. Sibert, executive secretary of the Ethical Motion Picture Society of America.

Exposition Park has been decided upon as the site. Additional endorsements for the big project are coming in daily to the executive headquarters in the Byrne Building, Los Angeles.

Williams Represents Industry

J. D. Williams, manager of Associated First National producers, is representing the motion picture industry at President Harding's conference on the unemployment problem.

Mr. Williams attended the first conference held in Washington September 26th and returned again on October 5th for the adjourned meeting. Just what part the motion picture industry will be called upon to play in solving the nation's problems of unemployment is not clear, but it is expected that the most important phase of work to be undertaken will be along the lines of constructive propaganda.

All the 4000 picture theaters represented in First National's list of franchise holders are waiting with much interest for Mr. Williams' report, as are the officials of the National Association of Motion Picture Industry, of which William A. Brady is president.

The Philosopher

More things than you see on the screen come up for discussion in the conferences which Elmer Harris holds daily with his Realart scenario department.

The other day somebody asked for a definition of a philosopher. At the time of adjournment, Alice Eyton had gotten the highest rating with her definition of him, or it, as "a person who doesn't want what he knows he can't have."

Back from Europe

Carl Laemmle, president of Universal, has arrived in Los Angeles and is in conference at Universal City with Irving G. Thalberg, his director general. The producer arrived from Europe where for several months he has been studying the motion picture situation there with particular reference to the possibility of foreign producers invading the American screen.

"It can't be done," he said upon his arrival at Universal City, and it was the first time in history that Carl Laemmle ever used the phrase for it is a tradition of the industry that nothing is impossible for the little giant of the films.

"The foreign producer will never become a competitive menace to the American screen," he said. "We are making better pictures today than ever before, but not nearly as good pictures as we are going to make. Los Angeles is the only place in the world where pictures can be produced with artistic economy."

The Universal chief found 18 units shooting at full blast at Universal City.

Questions Answered

Concerning the Writing of Photoplays

Q.—I love to read history, and I prefer historical novels to stories of modern times. I know that there are many others who share my tastes. Why, then, are not historical photoplays more frequently seen on the screen? Is it because producers do not know how to handle such subjects?

A.—Photoplay producers of to-day are surrounded with highly efficient research workers, scenic artists, costumers and advisors of every kind. They "know how to handle" any subject that is in demand. The production of screen entertainments is governed by the balance of public taste. This is no different than in the publication of books and magazines; no different, in fact, than in any creative artistic enterprise. If there is a great demand for a certain general kind of novel the publishers buy and print stories that meet that demand. There are styles in stories just as there are in clothes. Inevitably every art must be governed to a large extent by commercialism. Publishers, impresarios and photoplay producers must needs give the public what the public desires, else bankruptcy terminates their activities. Some historical screen plays—"costume pictures"—have been successes, but exhibitors report that as a rule they do not draw good houses. You like this kind of entertainment, and many others agree with you. But while you are in the minority you must abide by the likes and dislikes of the majority.

Q.—I continually hear that motion picture producers are looking for "plots" for screen stories. Do not people get tired of these eternal plots? Is the world made up of people with nothing better to do than plot against someone? Why not have some pictures without plots?

A.—Like many others you have a wrong impression of the meaning of the word "plot" as applied to a photoplay. Your definition of plot is "a conspiracy." The plot of a drama ,or photodrama ,is a chain of incidents, a sequence of dramatic situations, correlated, logical, entertaining and convincing. The plot is the "plan" of the story. It is, to the completed production, what the architect's plan is to the finished structure, so far as the photodramatist is concerned. A screen drama utterly devoid of "plotters," conspirators ,or conspiracies, must nevertheless be based upon a definite story plot, governed by the dramatic unities and other fundamentals of photodramatic technique.

Q.—How may I go about bringing a published book or magazine story to the attention of a photoplay producer? I have sometimes read stories that I have felt would make good screen productions. Do I have to obtain permission to sell motion picture rights for such stories?

A.—The last sentence in your query is gloriously ingenuous. Do you have to obtain permission to sell a man's house ,or any other portion of his worldly goods? Most certainly you do! There is nothing more sacred than the fruit of one's creative imagination. Published stories are copyrighted. The screen rights are the property of the author, the publisher or the heirs of the author or the publisher. To offer such story for sale to a photoplay producer requires the permission of the holder of the copyright. If the story be an old one and the copyright has expired, or if it is the work of a foreign author who has neglected to secure copyrights in this country it is probable that it has been considered and discarded by the principal motion picture producers, for they have combed the world for adaptable material, and have used practically everything that is available. You will spend your time more profitably trying to create something from your own imagination than in trying to sell the work of other men's brains. There are accredited agents who handle authors' material on a commission basis, but they are necessarily experienced and thoroughly familiar with the story market, in all its many phases.

Q.—How many words may be used in a photoplay synopsis? I have read that 500 words is the limit, and yet I have been told that 1000 words may be used in some cases.

A.—Published statements, mostly based on guess work and individual opinion, have done much harm in this connection. There is no specified limit to the number of words that may be contained in a synopsis. The operation involved in submitting a photodramatic synopsis is based upon just one thing—the transfer of the story plot from the creative brain of the author, or seller, to the receptive brain of the producer, or possible buyer. Naturally, this should be accomplished in the briefest and most efficient possible manner. If a story can be told completely in 500 words it is well. But if this minimum will necessitate the omission of any important portion of the story, thus injuring its selling value, it is ridiculous to attempt such brevity. Do not count the words in a synopsis. Tell your story clearly and as briefly as is consistent with such clarity and with absolute completeness. Avoid repetition and all unnecessary description, as well as anything in the nature of lengthy dialogue. But, when in doubt, be slightly too lengthy rather than too brief.



A poor beginning in scenario writing, as in anything else, is usually the portent of a great ultimate victory. No greater danger besets the beginner than a too early success.



Photoplays in Review

By the Staff

"Is Life Worth Living?"

Why this attempt to photodramatise a story which in itself was rather conventional, unnatural and dull—surely without any of the salient characteristics which would make it good screen material? "Is Life Worth Living?" is an adaptation of "The Open Door" by George Weston, which appeared in the Saturday Evening Post. A few more such starring vehicles for Eugene O'Brien and he will be as dead cinematically as William Jennings Bryan is politically.

The story neither establishes a proper interest at the outset in the hero, nor accumulates any sympathy for him as it reels on its tedious way. Its philosophy and psychology are false ,in that it presents a young man with poetic feelings and longings employed in an investment concern, who, after passing through many vicissitudes, ultimately makes a success in the typewriter ribbon and carbon business! What a spectacle of artistic and aesthetic decline; what a deathblow to aspiration! A man with poetic and artistic impulses might, as a sacrifice for a girl, temporarily resign to the fate of selling typewriter ribbons—but it takes a hollow, unbeautiful soul indeed to picture such an eventuation as a triumph. Fortunately for mankind, the facts of life tell us that the poetical type is seldom thus satisfied.

It takes a long time for the story to get started, and by that time its stupidity will render the average spectator anaesthetic to what follows. There's an underworld sequence that is absolutely incomprehensible, so much so that if one happened to have lapsed into an amiable nap and was suddenly jarred into wakefulness, some doubt might be entertained as to whether the same or a different photoplay was on the screen.

With so colorless a story and such blurry characterizations to start with, plus the adapter's deadening treatment, "Is Life Worth Living?" makes sorry entertainment. Utterly without pictorial values, such a story when filmed cannot carry the additional burden of mediocre treatment. Furthermore, the reviewer would not only consider that life was not worth living, but would leap off the top of an office building gladly and without regret if he anticipated having to sit through many such pictures.

Synopsis—Mell Marley, a poetic chap given to studying the classics, is cashier in the investment house of Tallboy and Kinder. He gives the messenger $5,000 to take to the treasury to have changed into gold coins. The messenger never returns and no one believes Mell's story. The bonding company has him tried for embezzlement, but the jury gives him a suspended sentence.

Mell becomes a salesman for a typewriter ribbon and carbon concern. But he is completely lacking in initiative and does not succeed. One day, down to his last few cents, he is passing a pawnshop when he sees in the window a vest pocket automatic. Mell decides he must have it as a means of committing suicide.

Fixed with the burning desire to own this revolver, Mell goes out and makes enough sales to buy it. Then he goes walking down Riverside Drive, contemplating suicide, when he beholds on a bench an attractive young girl, weeping. She ignores his first offers of assistance, but finally thaws out. Then suddenly she faints. Mell quickly takes her to a comfortable boarding house where he secures a doctor and nurse. The doctor announces that Lois is in a run-down condition and needs rest and nourishment.

Mell must needs get money, so he pawns the revolver and sets about his business of selling ribbons and carbons. Lois is greatly worried over her debt to Mell and starts looking for a position as stenographer. For two days she returns wearied and jobless. So Mell hits upon the scheme of giving her something to do. He gets her a typewriter and tells her to write a form letter from the Marley Supply Company, in reference to the Marley typewriter ribbons and carbon paper.

Eleven answers are received from the first batch of one hundred letters. Business gradually increases until a bookkeeper and two salesmen have been taken on. This expansion has been due principally to the credit extended to Mell by Mr. Blum, the manufacturer, who has advanced him supplies. One day when things are going splendidly, Mr. Blum walks in—Lois is out at the time—and announces that he has heard from a rival dealer that Mell is a thief, and in that event he must withdraw his credit and insists that their account be settled at once. Mell now feels that everything is lost.

Then the investment house sends Mell a letter reading that the messenger has confessed his theft of $5,000 and he is exonerated.

"Little Italy"

A pleasing story of rather light entertainment content is "Little Italy," an original written by Frederick and Fanny Hatton for Alice Brady, and whipped into an excellent working script by Peter Milne. The detail is realistic and the humorous touches are in some instances quite sparkling and rib-tickling; in other places, naive.

There is nothing original in the theme, characters, or plot; but a delicately satirical treatment in spots and some exciting situations which give the photoplay melodramatic substance sustain interest throughout. The atmosphere and mood preserved are studies in realism.

The principal value of this photoplay to the screen writer is in its logical handling and finely drawn characters. Perhaps the fine acting of Alice Brady and George Fawcett are in a great part responsible for making the element of characterization supersede the pretty little romance itself in point of interest and artistic achievement.

However, Norman Kerry was utterly unsuited to the role of Antonio; he was never for a moment the passionate Italian lover, capable of murmuring sweet, delicate nothings in rapturous tones. He seems to me at all times to be the arch-type of ribbon clerk or the idealized traveling salesman for women's wear. His lackadai-

sical temperament marred a role the scenarist had evidently meant to represent a modern village Romeo, with all the Latin graces and predispositions.

The picture is in no wise padded, progressing with even rhythm and an economy of scenes. The authors were not a bit bashful about borrowing Mr. William Shakespeare's Montague-Capulet feud plot and transplanting it in Connecticut, U. S. A., but they neglected to render the high romantic, poetic note of "Romeo and Juliet." However, this was not their intention—we hope—and the result achieved makes an hour or so of "easy to look at" entertainment.

Synopsis—"Little Italy" is an Italian colony near New York City. There, in the new-world atmosphere of thriving truck-farms, the Italians keep alive many of their old-world customs and all of their old-world prejudices and feuds. Especially the feuds.

Rosa, only child of the widowed Marco Mascani, who is the wealthiest and most powerful Italian in the colony, and leader of one faction, is the belle of the settlement. But, like her famous countrywoman, the fair Juliet, she cares nothing for the suitors who are encouraged by her father, and loses her heart in one meeting with a fascinating youth who turns out to be a member of a family prominent in the rival faction.

Of course, this modern Juliet, loyal to the family feud, tried to renounce the man who has won her heart, and to end her soul turmoil she makes a rash vow to marry the first man she meets in the lane near her home—believing, of course, that only members of the Mascani faction would venture near her home.

You know that Fate would arrange to have the fascinating Tumullo take his life in his hand and promenade past the Mascani domicile at this critical moment, so that Rosa could meet him and no other. Meet him she did, and marry him she had to, or break her vow, which no well-brought-up Italian ever does.

As wife of the man she loves but thinks she really ought to hate, poor Rosa has a hectic experience. So does the whole colony before the rival families agree to bury the hatchet and be friends so that Rosa and her Antonio can settle down to married happiness together.

The Black Panther's Cub

"The Black Panther's Cub", which is an adaptation of Swinburne's "Faustine", is not a particularly gripping story because of the four distinct parts, though this does give Florence Reed the opportunity to display her versatility. The modern story is lacking in entertaining conflict because the only dramatic situation—that in the Apache dive—has been done so often before. Through many subtitles, many of them taken from Swinburne's poem, we learn that the theme is that bad blood won't tell if surrounded by the proper environment, but the action does not make this idea convincing. The characters are all commonplace and rather ordinary types, except Mary herself. She is quite appealing, but highly improbable. Again, we have a poor story made from a fine poem which was not intended for adaptation to the screen.

Synopsis—Mary Maudsley, the adopted daughter of the Earl of Maudsley, is in love with Sir Marling Grayham, although he is twenty years her senior. Because she fears he will not ask her to marry him because he is so much older, she feigns a fall from her horse and succeeds in gaining a confession of his love. When her father dies suddenly and his son Jack is unable to meet the debts on the estate, Mary is persuaded to go to Paris and impersonate Faustine, the former keeper of a notorious gambling palace, whom she seems to resemble. For the sake of her father's name, she goes, but when Marling chances to drift into the palace, she fears detection, and to get away asks one of her admirers, Count Boris, to take her anywhere for excitement. He grasps the opportunity to take her to an Apache dive and make love to her. Word is brought to Marling of the party by his sister-in-law, who was able to slip away unnoticed. With the aid of an Apache friend of Jack, the dive is located and Mary rescued. In the rescue, however, an old hag throws herself in front of Mary and is shot. She then says she was the original Faustine and Mary is her daughter, whom she had asked Earl Maudsley to adopt. Marling recognizes her and recalls telling her about her resemblance to the Empress Faustine. They all return to England, where Faustine dies and Mary and Marling are married.

The Child Thou Gavest Me

In "The Child Thou Gavest Me" the child, with his half-mischievous smile, his bright spontaneous charm, is present in all three big situations and the center of all the minor ones. His childishly humorous spoken titles add brightness and intense human interest to a rather shakily constructed plot. Once more the plot is based on an avoidable misunderstanding and a failure to recognize that seems hardly probable even before the picture loses its glamor. It is one of those exasperating stories in which the spectators are deliberately forced to believe for lack of anyone else that Tom was the man, and they are tricked in the solution by an implausible novel twist. The wife and the friend are quite true to life, but the husband is far from convincing, unless we lay his eccentricities to his war experiences. It was an original idea to make the husband his own antagonist, but for a picture the working out was not entirely pleasing to the spectators.

Synopsis—In the midst of her wedding preparations Norma Huntley seems most unhappy. Her mother tries to comfort her and tells her to forget the past as the child is dead. In a poorer part of the city, a small child is gazing at a newspaper picture of what he has been told is his mother. He begs to be taken to his mother, and with the daughter of a neighbor arrives at the wedding and is taken to Norma immediately after the ceremony. Her husband enters and demands to know whose child it is. Refusing to listen to any explanation, he insists they live as if nothing had happened while he devotes himself to detecting the father and killing him. He suspects all his friends, especially his best friend, Tom Marshall. He becomes convinced Tom is the father while Tom is his guest for a week-end and shoots him. At the moment of reaction, Norma makes him listen while she tells him the father was a drunken soldier who attacked her while she was a nurse in Belgium. The husband then turns the gun upon himself, explaining that he must have been the soldier. Tom's wound proves slight, and all ends happily.

The Photoplay Market

Compiled by Jane Horton

FIVE-REEL DRAMA —FEMALE LEAD

May Allison
Betty Blythe
Alice Brady
Alice Calhoun
Catherine Calvert
Ora Carew
Irene Castle
Helen Chadwick
Mildred Harris Chaplin
Naomi Childers
Ethel Clayton
Betty Compson
Viola Dana
Marion Davies
Priscilla Dean
Eleanor Faire
Elsie Ferguson
Pauline Frederick
Lillian Gish
Corinne Griffith
Vera Gordon
Edith Hallor
Elaine Hammerstein
Juanita Hansen
Wanda Hawley
Alice Joyce
Alice Lake
Florence Lawrence
Louise Lovely
Katherine MacDonald
Vivian Martin
Mae Marsh
May McAvoy
Mary Miles Minter
Carmel Myers
Alla Nazimova
Eva Novak
Jean Paige
Eileen Percy
Mary Pickford
Dorothy Phillips
Ruby de Remer
Irene Rich
Edith Roberts
Ruth Roland
Teddy Sampson
Gloria Swanson
Mabel Julienne Scott
Eileen Sedgwick
Anita Stewart
Blanche Sweet
Norma Talmadge
Rosemary Theby
Florence Vidor
Gladys Walton
Pearl White
Clara Kimball Young

FIVE-REEL DRAMA —MALE LEAD

John Barrymore
Lionel Barrymore
Hobart Bosworth
William Desmond
Elliott Dexter
William Farnum
Sessue Hayakawa
Gareth Hughes
Lloyd Hughes
Thomas Jefferson
J. Warren Kerrigan
James Kirkwood
Montague Love
Bert Lytell
Frank Mayo
Thomas Meighan
Owen Moore
Tom Moore
Antonio Moreno
Harry Myers
Eugene O'Brien
Charles Ray
William Russell
Joe Ryan
Milton Sills
Conway Tearle

FIVE-REEL COMEDY-DRAMA —FEMALE LEAD

May Allison
Billie Burke
June Caprice
Marguerite Clark
Viola Dana
Bebe Daniels
Dorothy Gish
Wanda Hawley
Justine Johnson
Mollie King
Doris May
Mary Miles Minter
Mary Pickford
Constance Talmadge

FIVE-REEL COMEDY-DRAMA —MALE LEAD

Douglas Fairbanks
Carter de Haven
Johnny Jones
Douglas MacLean
Tom Moore
Charles Ray
Wallace Reid
Bryant Washburn

FIVE-REEL COMEDY

Charlie Chaplin
Max Linder
Charles Murray
Kala Pasha
Ben Turpin

FIVE-REEL WESTERN

Art Acord
Harry Carey
Lester Cuneo
William Duncan
Jack Drum
Ray Gallagher
Neal Hart
Jack Hoxie
Tom Mix
Pete Morrison
Antonio Moreno
Will Rogers
Tom Santchi
Russell Simpson

THREE-REEL COMEDY

Harold Lloyd

TWO-REEL COMEDY —FEMALE LEAD

Vioria Daniel
Dorothy Devore
Louise Fazenda
Phyllis Haver
Irene Hunt
Pearl Shepard
Edna Shipman

TWO-REEL COMEDY —MALE LEAD

Jimmie Adamas
Alexander Alt
Jimmy Aubrey
Monty Banks
George Bunny
Charlie Chaplin
Chester Conklin
Clyde Cook
Bud Duncan
Neely Edwards
Harry Gribben
Lloyd Hamilton
Ham Hamilton
Buster Keaton
Jack Livingston
Harold Lloyd
Hank Mann
Harry McCoy
Lee Moran
Charles Murray
Kala Pasha
Larry Semon
Sid Smith
Ford Sterling
Harry Swett
Ben Turpin
Bobbie Vernon
Jack White
Leo White

TWO-REEL WESTERN —FEMALE LEAD

Josephine Hill
Helen Holmes
Fritzie Ridgway

TWO-REEL WESTERN —MALE LEAD

Art Acord
F. Braidwood
William Fairbanks
C. E. Hatton
J. B. Warner

ONE-REEL COMEDY

Ida Allen
Eddie Boland
Billy Fletcher
Gaylord Lloyd
Harry Mann
George Orey
Snub Pollard
Rex Story

SERIAL

Ann Little
Ruth Roland
Antonio Moreno
Eddie Polo

The PHOTODRAMATIST

announces

I. A series of technical articles—on Theme, Plot, Characterization, Situation, Elaboration and Visualization—by six of the greatest scenario writers in Filmdom, commencing next month.

II. Another series, starting soon, treating of the progress of a story—from the moment of its acceptance until it is finally screened in a Cinema Theatre—through all the modus operandi of production and distribution.

Enclosed find $2.50, for which please mail me The PHOTODRAMATIST for one year.

Name.....

Street.....

City.....

The PHOTODRAMATIST

I. W. Hellman Bldg.
Los Angeles, Cal.

(Continued from Page 30)

The popular magazine writers in most cases surpass the masters in style—i. e., in cleverness and glibness—but do not approach the masters in content. Style is not needed on the screen; smart phrases and clever wording will not photograph—except in subtitles. What the student needs most often is breadth of vision; he should therefore dilute his own thoughts with the thoughts of the artistically and intellectually great.

I recommend the following books to all students of screen writing: "The Planter of Malata," by Joseph Conrad; "Sister Carrie," by Theodore Dreiser; "The Seven that Were Hanged," by Andreyev; "Jurgen," by James Branch Cabell; "Poor White," by Sherwood Anderson; "Crime and Punishment," by Dostoieffsky; "Lord Jim," by Joseph Conrad; "The Revolt of the Angels," by Anatol France; "The Moon and Sixpence," by Somerset Maugham, and "Nocturne," by Frank Swinnerton.

Taking Notes

There is a modern inclination to discard all ideas and practices which were used in days and years past and gone. Many screen writers consider it old-fashioned to take notes, but I believe it would be of value to most people to jot down a few lines in a note book which might later recall to memory some dramatic or amusing scene. Also, one hears in a casual way of someone's experience that might be used as a foundation for or situation in a screen story. One's memory cannot be trusted. Any number of things happen on a street-car, in a church, a theatre, or on the street, that one might find handy to use several years later. My own experience is that the jotting down of a few names in connection with an incident serves to bring it back to me as vividly as at the time of happening, even though four or five years have elapsed.

One occasionally recalls some exciting or sentimental or tragic event from one's own life, something not thought of for years. Don't let these fugitive memories escape. Write them down in the trusty note-book. Stevenson, Emerson, Hawthorne and Dickens made copious notes, for they realized that some happy, suggestive thoughts come once, returning—nevermore.

The screen writer in particular, who creates in sequential pictorial terms, can gain much from jotting down observations of mannerisms, gaits, habits, and various individual idiosyncrasies and peculiarities. An oddly furnished room, with perhaps a strange haunting spirit to it, should be described and listed for future use.

There may come a time when you think of an excellent title for a photoplay, or a fine theme. Put it right down on paper. Soon you will have enough of Life's highwater marks recorded to furnish material for a dozen photoplays. It was Francis Bacon who said: "Thoughts that come unsought are generally the most valuable, and should be secured, because they never return."

Significant

Senator Lusk, who devised the New York censorship bill, is the author of the forty-five hundred word report on radical activities and of the bill to restrict the freedom of teaching, designed more especially to outlaw schools of radical economic theory. It is strange that such words as censorship and restriction should prove so popular in the land of the free—and, particularly, within a few miles of the statue of Liberty.

Pennsylvania Wisdom

When "The Miracle Man" was first presented before the Pennsylvania Board of Censors they pronounced it "disapproved because it deals with lust, prostitution and sex immorality." This most exalting and inspiring of all photodramas was finally passed, after much hemming and hawing and numerous deletions.

The same eminently wise censors cut the following sub-titles from "The Eternal Magdalene": "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone" and "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

Thus is exemplified the wisdom and high intelligence of the representatives of the people; but do the people of Pennsylvania stand for what these men stand for? If they do, one cannot but reflect upon what charming folks they must be—as charming as rattlesnakes.

Another Scenario Course

The University of California extension division announces a scenario class for beginners and a class in continuity writing for advanced pupils, to be given at 828 Pacific Finance Building, Los Angeles. Registration or information may be secured at 628 Metropolitan Building, Los Angeles. The classes will be oral, and there will be no correspondence instruction. William Gilmore Beymer, formerly of the American Film Co., is instructor.

One by one, the colleges and universities are falling into line.



We sold her first story to Thomas H. Ince

YET ELIZABETH THATCHER *never dreamed she could write for the screen until we tested her story telling ability. Will you send for the same test—FREE?*

ELIZABETH THATCHER is a Montana housewife. So far as she could see there was nothing that made her different from thousands of other housevives.

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'I had never tried to write for publication or the screen," she said in a letter to the Palmer Photoplay Corporation. "In fact, I had no desire to write until I saw your advertisement."

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She clipped a coupon like the one at the bottom of this page, and received a remarkable questionnaire. Through this test, she indicated that she possessed natural story-telling ability, and proved herself acceptable for the training course of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation.

And Thomas H. Ince bought her first attempt

Only a few weeks after her enrollment, we sold Mrs. Thatcher's first story to Mr. Ince. With Mr. Ince's check in her hand Mrs. Thatcher wrote:

"I feel that such success as I have had is directly due to the Palmer Course and your constructive help."

Can you do what Mrs. Thatcher did? Can you, too, write a photoplay that we can sell? Offhand you will be inclined to answer No. But the question is too important to be answered offhand. Will you be fair to yourself? Will you make in your own home the simple test of creative imagination and story-telling ability which revealed Mrs. Thatcher's unsuspected talent to her?

Send for the Van Loan questionnaire

The test is a questionnaire prepared by H. H. Van Loan, the celebrated photoplaywright, and Prof. Malcolm MacLean, former teacher of short-story writing at Northwestern University. If you have any story-telling instinct at all, send for this questionnaire and find out for yourself just how much talent you have.

We will be frank with you. The Palmer Photoplay Corporation exists first of all to *sell photoplays*. It trains photoplay writers in order that it may have more photoplays to sell.

With the active aid and encouragement of the leading producers, the Corporation is literally combing the country for new screen writers. Its Department of Education was organized to produce the writers who can produce the stories. The Palmer institution is the industry's accredited agent for getting the stories wtihout which productoin of motion pictures cannot go on.

Not for "born writers," but for story-tellers

The acquired art of fine writing cannot be transferred to the screen. The same producer who bought Mrs. Thatcher's first story has rejected the work of scores of famous novelists and magazine writers. They lacked the kind of talent suited for screen expression. Mrs. Thatcher, and hundreds of others who are not professional writers, have that gift.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation cannot endow you with such a gift. But we can discover it, if it exists. And we can teach you how to employ it for your lasting enjoyment and profit.

We invite you to apply this free test

Clip the coupon below, and we will send you the Van Loan questionnaire. You will assume no obligation. If you pass the test, we will send you interesting material descriptive of the Palmer course and Service, and admit you to enrollment, should you choose to develop your talent. If you cannot pass this test, we will frankly advise you to give up the idea of writing for the screen. It will be a waste of their time and ours for children to apply.

Will you give this questionnaire a little of your time? It may mean fame and fortune to you. In any event, it will satisfy you as to whether or not you should attempt to enter this fascinating and highly profitable field. Just use the coupon below and do it now before you forget.

PALMER PHOTOPLAY Corporation, Department of Education

I. W. Hellman Building, Los Angeles, California

PLEASE send me, without cost or obligation on my part, your questionnaire. I will answer the questions in it and return it to you for analysis. If I pass the test, I am to receive further information about your Course and Service.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....PD—11-21



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You are invited to have *FREE* the booklet that tells what few great books make a man think straight and talk well

WHICH will succeed — the one who spends *all* his precious reading time with the daily paper, or the other, who is gaining little by little, in a few delightful minutes each day, that knowledge of a few truly great books which will distinguish him always as a really well-read man?

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THE PHOTODRAMATIST

THE SCENARIO WRITERS MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 1921



Scene from Marshall Neilan's "Bits of Life"

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By H. H. Van Loan

and

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DECEMBER, 1921
Volume III. No. 7.

Official Organ of
The Screen Writers' Guild

The PHOTODRAMATIST



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THE JANUARY NUMBER

Will feature "The Eminent Author and the Screen," by Mary Austin; "Stories Wanted by Fourteen Stars," a symposium edited by George Landy; and articles by Mary O'Connor, Wesley Ruggles, James Woods Morrison, Ruth Cross, Helen Sherry, Joseph Franklin Poland and Clyde Westover.

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LEGAL SERVICE BUREAU

Palmer Photoplay Corporation



The Palmer Photoplay Corporation announces the inauguration of a Legal Service Bureau, to be operated in the interests of students of its Department of Education, and established authors.

Competent and adequate legal service, designed not only to fully protect authors' legal rights but to enable them to obtain United States copyright on scenario material, is now available to members of this bureau.

The Legal Service Bureau is under the personal supervision and direction of a nationally known attorney of twenty-five years' experience, and especially equipped with a thorough knowledge of the varied phases of Motion Picture activity from the writing of scenarios to the exploitation of the finished product.

A booklet descriptive of the service will be mailed upon request. Address Legal Service Bureau, Palmer Photoplay Corporation, 533 I. W. Hellman Building, Los Angeles, Cal.

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DECEMBER, 1921
Volume III. No. 7.

Official Organ of
The Screen Writers' Guild

The PHOTODRAMATIST

The Screen Drama League

By Alfred Hustwick

TWO months ago on the editorial page of this magazine Thompson Buchanan issued a "call to arms" against censorship. Many readers have already written to the editor asking a very natural question, to wit, "What can *I* do to fight film censorship?" The editor has turned these letters over to me with a request for a short article which will answer that question, in part, at least.

I assume that *every* reader of The Photodramatist is a friend of the moving picture and an advocate of uncensored films. If he is a professional screen writer it is his art and, to be more practical, his job that film censorship threatens. If he is a student of screen writing, ambitious to win renown as a photodramatist, it is his future that is imperilled. And even if he is only a detached observer, a patron of the pictures, or, to suppose the impossible, an absolutely disinterested person who has no interest whatsoever in the screen, he has still a big stake in the censorship fight, something bigger than a job or a career—his personal liberty.

Before suggesting means to combat the menace of censorship let me make clear just how serious that menace has become. Forty per cent of the people in the United States are at present forced to swallow a diet of mutilated films. Two-fifths of the country is already in the enemy's hands and the remaining three-fifths is sustaining a persistent attack from a well-organized censorship movement—a movement that is backed by unlimited money, directed by shrewd propagandists and supported by thousands of well-meaning people who, if they understood its real motivation, would desert its ranks instanter.

The monstrous thing about this censorship movement is its sickening hypocrisy. It camouflages its real objective under a pretense of "purifying the movies." But the "movies" are only the first victims, shrewdly selected because they are less able to withstand the attack than older institutions. The censorship movement, and the Blue Sunday agitation, are simply minor manifestations of a tremendous "reform" campaign against personal liberty, a compaign that will not stop, unless it suffers an early and complete defeat, until every form of entertainment, every medium of artistic expression, every product of the printing press, and every public and social impulse that leads away from ancient dogma, has been caught, tamed and broken to the harness of illiberalism.

Liberty is as hard to preserve as it is to win. Government by a minority is an evil that constantly threatens the most democratic of states. The censorship advocates, advance agents as they are of the great "reform" which aims at the restoration of the Dark Ages, know only too well that if they can successfully metamorphose the screen into a timorous and attenuated servant of their desires, exploiting their own narrow beliefs and narrower moral laws, they will have won the first objective in their campaign to muzzle and control the stage, the press, the public rostrum—even the enlightened pulpit.

These apostles of the gospel of gloom, who believe that laughter is sinful, that love is shameful, and that earth is a wilderness and Heaven their real home, these lineal de-

scendants of the old inquisitors and witch-burners, will stop at nothing to secure their ends. They know they have only one foe to fear, an awakened public opinion. But they also know that public opinion most often awakens after the damage is done. Forty per cent of the country has fallen into their hands. In the remaining sixty per cent public opinion is being rapidly aroused, but there is still danger. The misguided ministers, the hoodwinked civic and social organizations who have been misled into supporting censorship; the vigilant lobbies in the country's legislatures; the unceasing campaign of lies and misrepresentation emanating from the offices of paid publicists; these influences must be met and overwhelmed. Fire must be met with fire, publicity with publicity, lobbying with lobbying, and votes with votes.

So I suggest that every reader of this magazine who is not already actively engaged in the anti-censorship campaign should get into action at once. If you belong to a club or a society organize the other members to oppose censorship. If you can make a speech in public, do it. Whenever censorship is mentioned in your local paper write a letter to the editor of that paper setting forth your views. If your town is already suffering under censorship get your friends, who believe with you, to join you in knocking it out. Use your tongue, your pen and your vote, whenever you get the chance. The censorship advocates won't give you much chance to vote on the question but, if they do, rally the "antis" to the polls and snow the "reformers" under. Don't leave it to the motion picture people and the writers. In your home town the men who make the laws are not in the least interested in the merits or demerits of censorship as seen by an outsider. They want to know whether YOU want censorship or not. And you've let forty per cent of the country go under because of your apathy. Remember that, and get busy.

As a concrete suggestion, I believe the organization of a Screen Drama League in your city, for the purpose of combating any movement adversely affecting the screen as well as discussing ways and means of advancing the motion picture art and technique, would prove a powerful social force. You could make your headquarters a significant center for cultured, thoughtful persons interested in keeping the motion picture alive—for educational, scientific, artistic or aesthetic reasons. Perhaps one of your motion picture theatre exhibitors would be glad to allow you the use of his theatre for a couple of hours once a week. If he is a man of courage and conviction, he may run anti-censorship slides or film on his screen—prepared by your organization. He may permit anti-censorship four-minute men, representatives of your Screen Drama League, to speak from his stage.

Write to the editor of the Photodramatist, if you are interested in this plan. He believes—as I do—that a Screen Drama League could be made national in character, with representatives and headquarters in every city. If you have some other suggestion to offer, speed it to him. If some feasible plan can be adopted, he will start a special department in the Photodramatist devoted to news and comment from your own local organization and others; will prepare useful and instructive literature for you; and do everything in his power to accord you complete co-operation.

Now is the time to act. You may not be able to accomplish much by yourself *but*—every letter to the papers, every speech, every argument with a friend, every letter to a legislator, every vote against censorship, will help to swell the tide of public resentment; and wherever censorship has encountered *organized opposition,* wherever publicity has aroused public interest, censorship has been defeated. What it has won it has won by stealth. Forty per cent of the country has been lost. Don't let the remaining territory go by default. Let the editor hear from you.



If—Why?

By Katharine Hart

We are told
By the wise folks of old,
That speech is silver and silence is gold.
If we've seen,
And we know what they mean,
Then why did we name it the *Silver* Screen?

The Guild Forum

A monthly department devoted to the interests of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America, the official organization of recognized photodramatists and studio staff writers.

By Alfred Hustwick

The Screen Writers' Guild

OFFICERS

Frank E. Woods, President.
June Mathis, Vice-President.
Eugene Presbrey, Treasurer and Executive Secretary.
Dwight Cleveland, Recording Secretary.

Executive Committee

The officers and Thompson Buchanan, Elmer Harris, A. S. LeVino, Jeanie MacPherson, Frederick Palmer, Elmer Rice, Rob Wagner.

"The Writers" Opens

With the opening of "The Writers" on the evening of November 29th, when a very successful house-warming and Hallowe'en party was staged, the Guild entered into possession of one of the cosiest club homes to be found in the West. Incidentally, the Authors' League of America has a western branch of which it may well be proud. If the writer's information is correct, "The Writers" is the first real club to be established by any of the League's various guilds for the use of all its members.

Now that the club is functioning, it is expected that some of the Guild committees which have not got into action will hold early meetings to take up a number of important matters. The board room on the second floor of the clubhouse has been fitted up for the use of all committees and for council meetings, and business may be transacted therein under conditions which insure comfort and provide inspiration.

Those members who, through pressure of work or absence from the city, have not yet had an opportunity to visit "The Writers," have a treat in store for them. They will find it a restful, homelike institution where a friend may be taken to lunch or dinner with the full assurance that the club cuisine and service will give complete satisfaction. Lunch is being served daily to all comers, but dinner must be ordered before noon on the day a table is required.

Mr. Clarence R. Sharpe, formerly of the Rainier National Park Inn, and recently with the Hollywood Hotel, has been appointed manager of "The Writers," and has secured a first-class chef and a staff of Filipino waiters and houseboys. The board of governors of "The Writers," for the first year, is as follows:—

Chairman, Thompson Buchanan,
William C. de Mille,
Elmer Harris,
Marion Fairfax,
Albert Shelby LeVino,
Jeanie Macpherson,
Richard Willis,
W. F. Dodd,
Russell M. Taylor,
Jack Holt,

and one more to be appointed. The officers of the Screen Writers' Guild are members of the board ex-officio.

The committees reporting to the board of governors are as follows:—

Membership, Jeanie Macpherson, chairman.
House, Albert Shelby LeVino.
Finance, Elmer Harris, chairman.
Literature and Art, Wm. C. de Mille.
Entertainment, Marion Fairfax.
Welfare, Richard Willis, chairman.

The club address is 6716 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood. Telephone, Hollywood 5341.

The Writers' Cramp

"The Writers," which is the club established by The Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League, offers for the occasion of its first annual jollification a program of delightful divertisements which include the following attractions:

Speeches, neither long nor serious, by George Ade, Rupert Hughes, William C. de Mille and Frank S. Woods. And Will Rogers says he'll have something to say if he returns from New York in time. Last time we heard from him he said he'd be back, sure.

A cabaret of unrivalled excellence which will include:

Basil Ruysdael, singing a song of Gypsy Love, and accompanied by a soprano whose name he does not reveal.

Many dancing acts, the excellence of which is guaranteed by the names of the performers:

Marion Morgan's nimble maids.

The Spanish Fandango, contributed by Neely Dickson.

Ruth St. Denis.

Rudolph Valentino with Alice Lake, in the Argentine Tango.

A one-act play which will turn the spotlight on the "movies" and censorship, performed by a notable cast, Pauline Frederick, Bert Lytell, Wallace Reid, Thomas H. Ince, Harold Lloyd, Ben Turpin, Theodore Roberts, Wanda Hawley, Zazu Pitts, Milton Sills, Herbert Rawlinson, George Foster Platt and others. Produced under the personal direction of Mr. Platt.

Boxing, in the form of fast four-round bouts with plenty of pep and punch, and also

A Battle Royal, in the roped ring, to determine who wrote the first scenario. A history-making contest full of cleverness and color.

The National Movie Anthem, which will surprise and please.

Many special stunts, notably one by Jack Holt, who promises something breath-taking.

Dinner will commence shortly before 8 o'clock. At that hour the cabaret will start and will end some time after 10 o'clock. Dancing for all will follow the cabaret, with surprise stunts interspersed with the dances to liven up everybody, especially those who don't dance.

Twenty "baby stars" of the screen will scintillate in a special act, among them being Marjorie Daw, Lois Wilson, Gertrude Olmstead, Virginia Faire, Pauline Starke, Colleen Moore, Zazu Pitts, Marguerite de la Motte, Lucita Squier, May McAvoy, Madge Bellamy.

The only reason "The Writers' Cramp" is referred to on this page is to urge those members who have not yet reserevd their tickets to telephone Mr. LeVino at 597111, or to call the club at Hollywood 5341. Up to the time of the writing of these paragraphs, seats have been going so fast that there is little chance of any tickets remaining unsold. The chances are more than even that many Guild members will "get left" through carelessness. It's going to be a "jamboree" that you can't afford to miss. That's why this tip is worth taking. Telephone NOW.

Busy Days

The editor of this department regrets the lack of news which characterizes it this month. The excuse he offers is, however, an excellent one. Too much "writers' cramp."

Changes of Address

All Guild members who have changed their residence addresses since January 1, 1921, should send their new addresses to the Secretary without delay. This will help to facilitate communication and the forwarding of mail.



LET us not deride the writing of comedy-dramas. Let all screen writers realize that it is easier to evoke tears than laughter, and that the highest sense of humor is akin to the highest sense of tragedy: the realization of the futility of life. Nations become decadent, despondent—when they have ceased to laugh.



THE Mt. Everest of Conceit: The screen writer who told a friend that he didn't attend the presentation of photoplays or read books because he didn't want to spoil his own "thought!"



FIRST rate photodramatists will ever realize most keenly the element of pathos in the highest conceivable happiness!



GOOD scenarios are often stranger than truth.

The Cinema University

By Larry C. Moen

"OH, I USED to go to the movies a lot, but now I haven't seen one in months. They're all so much alike —you always know how they're going to come out—well, I don't go unless I haven't got anything else to do."

The first time I heard that remark, I paid little heed. But when I heard it for the umpty-umpth time, I began to reflect. Was the public tiring of the movies? Was it attending them merely to kill time, and without any deep interest? I hesitated to believe it.

But as a result of the investigation into which I was thus led, I have come to believe, reluctantly, that the movies are indeed slipping — that unless a little elixir of life is injected into their veins they are going to slip a great deal further.

How many pictures of the last year have possessed any vitality —any spark of originality? Pitifully few.

True, we cannot expect all photoplays to be great. For every song that has lived, thousands have died. For every "Lear of the Steppes," there are written countless scores of Jazzy Stories novelettes. There will always be a great deal of mediocrity in any art—but we have a right to demand a few masterpieces, surely.

Why are we turning out so many reels of celluloid banality? I believe it is because we are still imitating the arts of the drama and literature.

Only today, in reviewing "Sentimental Tommy," I praised its faithfulness, as a whole, to the Barrie story. After all, is not that as doubtful a compliment as if an art critic, in writing of a new bit of sculpture, were to say that the creator had succeeded in transferring Massenet's "Elegie" to marble exquisitely?

The photoplay is not, as George Jean Nathan would have it, a bastard art that robs literature of style, sculpture of repose, drama of words and painting of color. The photoplay is—simply the photoplay. An art, I believe, of greater possibilities in its own field than any of them, if we would but sound its depths.

What novelist's lengthy description can suggest half the beauty that one pictured scene on the silver screen conveys in an instant? What drama holds the range and sweep of action—of great crowds in motion —that one flash of a screen spectacle depicts? What painter's frozen figures can compare with the graceful motion of those who people the photoplay?

But in these very possibilities lies a great danger.

Because he can show real scenery — because he can wreck real trains — because he can show closeups of the heroine which reveal the very texture of the skin (plus greasepaint) — the producer forgets the imagination. He forgets that the plays of one of the greatest dramatists of all time were played on a bare stage, with placards to denote the setting, and played successfully.

But, the producer retorts, they want realism. They want to see life as they live it—they want to be able to see themselves in the role of the hero and heroine.

Granted. We all sink ourselves into the part of the hero, or heroine, if we are truly absorbed. We go to pictures to get away, for a time, from the bare realities.

But—does the shoe clerk, in his pictured fancies, see himself as a shoe clerk? I think not.

The point I am trying to make is this: The proper realm of the photoplay is not primarily realism, but romance. Naturalism, to be sure. We want well motivated

By, of, and for

motion picture men! "There should be a motion picture university, run as an experimental studio, training directors, camera men, scenario writers, laboratory workers, editors and title writers," says Larry C. Moen, drama editor of the Fargo Forum.

action, we want sympathetic human character, but we want, with it, the touch of romance that lifts the screen above the level of commonplace reality. Then we stimulate the imagination, and send our spectators out with a fresh glow in their hearts. The fact that we are living in an age of drab realism is all the more reason for a desire to escape it all occasionally. Despite evolution, fairy stories continue to enjoy a considerable degree of popularity with the youngest set—and some of us get more pleasure than we might care to suggest out of reading the absurd fantasies to them.

But is there aught of imagination—of fancy—in the current output of photoplays? Better imagination run riot, as in "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari," than the dreary triviality of a "Why Did She Tell?"

I believe that motion pictures will reach their greatest heights in America, the land of their birth, but there is no escaping the fact that some of the most significant things of late have been coming from across the water. We have made our pictures much as Henry Ford makes automobiles, and without denying the usefulness of his much maligned vehicle, surely no one would class it as a work of art. The picture should be custom built—not one of 5,000,000 stock models.

Take a specific instance. Compare "Gypsy Blood" and the American "Carmen" with Farrar. Farrar is unquestionably an artiste—but an operatic artiste. Her Carmen was the operatic Carmen. A vivid figure, to be sure, but not the Carmen of the cigarette factory. Negri, on the other hand, was the Carmen of Merimee rather than Bizet. She was unkempt, dirty, lazy, insolent and faithless—but was she not Carmen? How many of our insipid ingenues have the courage to so portray a role when occasion requires?

The German directorial method, too, deserves comment. It is journalistic in nature —objective in tone. Things move ahead steadily, with few disturbing cutbacks, closeups or visions.

Yet that straightforwardness does not imply lack of imagination. The fairy stories of which we have spoken are told in words mostly of one syllable. A thing may be told simply and plainly, yet so artistically that it conveys a wealth of imaginative beauty.

But where these foreign "regisseurs" tell their story in the direct manner of a newspaper report—American-made films are full of pictorial split infinitives.

Consider, for instance, that colossal hocus pocus, "Way Down East." To put a third rate imitation of a Mack Sennett burlesque on a kerosene circuit rural drama into the same picture with the sublime artistry of Lillian Gish is precisely as if Bernhardt in "Camille" were to be played as a vaudeville sketch, with "blackface comedy singing and dancing" played in one between acts.

And what else?

Mostly the usual dreary round of film clichés, each "A Celluloid Masterpiece," "Greatest Since 'The Birth of a Nation,'" "Tessie Aintshesweet in the Greatest Triumph of Her Career," "Another 'Miracle Man,'"—it is to weep.

Here and there, among them, there has been a flash of originality, a bit of daring imagination and then—thump! back into the rut.

Now then, just who and what are to blame—and what can we do about it?

To begin with, there is the producer. He has a great deal to say about just what sort of pictures are to be made, and he is entitled to, for it is his money that is being spent. To be the head of a great film corporation, a man must be something of a business man—and unfortunately the business man is seldom an artist at anything except making two dollars blossom where but one grew before. Many of these executives have been unable to see beyond the present profit, and the slogan has been, "Get the money now," little thought being given to the morrow, and the reaction which might come. As a result we have had pictures made, primarily, for the box office, and sold, all too often, on a basis of misrepresentation and exaggeration, until exhibitor and public take film advertising and publicity with a liberal dose of salt.

Not that I am belittling the box office. If a picture cannot interest a sufficient number of people to be profitable, there is no economic justification for producing it. The unfortunate thing, however, has been the tendency, because a certain picture has made money, to make all others of the same type.

We need, then, producers of vision and courage. There are several in the field who possess those qualities in no inconsiderable measure. The right type of producer is going to be arrived at, eventually, by the simple process of the survival of the fittest.

Given our producer, however, we run up against a fresh difficulty. He must have the right kind of people with which to surround himself. He must have directors of ability and ideals, a capable technical staff, players who will sympathetically understand and carry out his aims. And where is he to obtain them?

There are, of course, the other studios. He may watch for people who show signs of true ability, employ them, and develop them along the lines of his own policy. These people, however, are trained in the making of the conventional photoplay, and when it comes to making the unusual picture they are likely to be at sea.

If, on the other hand, he goes into the highways and byways and selects people who seem to have the artistic insight that he requires, he will have subordinates with good intentions but no knowledge of the craft.

There is, in brief, no source of trained makers of pictures save the studios themselves. There should be a motion picture university. Not a motion picture department in a state university, but a school by, of and for motion picture men. It should be run as an experimental studio, training directors, cameramen, scenario writers, laboratory workers, editors and title writers—it should, in short, duplicate a studio on a small scale.

Such a school could be made profitable, I am sure, from a purely financial standpoint, with the wide interest in motion picture production which prevails, and think what it would mean to the producers eventually!

It would have to be a practical school, maintained with the co-operation of the leading producers, directors, writers and players, or it would fail of its purpose, but along with the practicality there would be a fine idealism, and a venturesome spirit, that would lead to new advances in film craft.

The school could make, as part of its work, short productions, just as dramatic schools present plays at frequent intervals. These pictures would be likely to possess no little originality, and since they would not be made for commercial distribution, their makers would be unhampered by the usual restrictions. They might be very crude and amateurish, but they would be the source of other and finer things.

And now, you say, where does the author come in on all of this?

Simply in this: We cannot have the best in pictures until we have great picture authors to write the scripts from which they are to be made. We must have writers trained to cast their thought in pictures—writers who know their medium thoroughly, and write for it, and it alone.

Given the proper director, players and producer, we still arrive nowhere unless they are furnished proper material. So it all goes back, in the final analysis, to the photodramatist. Just at present there does not seem to be any great avenue of opportunity open to him. The door has been slammed in his face a great deal, but matters are slowly changing.

Slowly and surely, producers are educating the public to appreciate finer pictures (principally by surfeiting it with mediocrity), and only the producer who meets new conditions as they arise will long survive.

I have penned these words in no spirit of harsh criticism. I do not believe the motion picture is going to fail of its mission. I believe that great changes must come about—but I am equally certain that they will come.

So the photodramatist may well scorn the rejection slip, work and study ceaselessly, and look forward with confidence to the day, not so far off, when he will come into his own.



Dodgers of Life and Death

It would be futile to deny that most Americans prefer entertainment of a light frothy, merry type; it would be equally futile to deny that they avert the gaze in the presence of tragedy. Even when inexorable facts mercilessly beat them down, they seek some twentieth century metaphysical hocus-pocus, some spirit-deadening and sense-dulling panacea to still their troubled souls.

The happy ending and the over-sentimentalized photoplay is the result of a racial decadence which makes for spiritual cowardice—that demands a soft place to light upon!

The Three Devils

By Jeanie MacPherson

What the screen writer must avoid above all else are the three devils: haste, carelessness and discouragement.

One-tenth of the scenarios now received at the Famous Players-Lasky Studio, written with ten times as much care, would stand ten times as much chance of acceptance.

There would be fewer rejections if every scenario writer would, after completing each story, lay it in the shelf for three months; take it up, re-write it, lay it aside for three months more—then re-write it again. Time is an inexorable slayer of Illusions and Delusions, and you will realize this most potently when you find the grand imagining of Today the absurdity of Tomorrow. Ideas which seem brilliant will often appear puerile after the initial self-intoxication has worn off.

Too many of the scenarios received at Famous Players-Lasky bear all the earmarks of having been hastily written upon the inception of a fragmentary dream, and shipped off sans thoughtful re-reading and revision.

There would be more successful photo-dramatists if more beginners persisted doggedly. The majority quit only too soon—I can bear this out statistically. After say three rejections, it is unusual to ever hear again from the author.

The only way to learn to write scenarios or anything else is to keep on writing—and studying the medium.

Despite pessimistic notions, there is a constant search being made by every modern studio for new writers of fresh, original viewpoint. Those milk and water souls who cannot stand rebuffs—the quitters—seldom have any freshness or originality in their constitutions.

The first time I submitted a scenario to Cecil B. de Mille he ironically informed me that I had plenty of imagination, but wrote like a carpenter! On another occasion I had to write six separate and distinct scenarios running into hundreds of pages of copy paper to secure an acceptance from Mr .de Mille.

Uncompromisingly avoid the three devils if you would have the gods smile.



Travelling by Reel

By Rheinhart Kleiner

I see the world, and yet abide
Here at my native Hudson's tide!
  Untroubled by a single care,
  Unwearied as I onward fare,
Nor pausing in my league-long stride!

I know the deserts, reaching wide,
The peaks that soar in lonely pride,
  The states and empires everywhere;
    I see the world!

I need no retinue or guide;
With this revolving reel I ride
  And see the screen's bright pageant flare
  As through a window's flashing square;
With comfort such as these provide,
    I see the world!



Women as Screen Writers

By Agnes Parsons

"WHAT is the future of the woman screen writer?"

The question was asked of a group of men typifying the various branches of activity in a motion picture studio; a producer, a director, a scenario editor and a film editor. The answers shot back in quick succession, and the concensus of opinion was tinged with just enough skepticism to demand proof in sustaining an affirmative answer in the woman writer's favor.

Producer, director, editor and even exhibitor today, throughout the entire industry, regardless of personal opinion, concede woman has a "place in the screen," by the mere fact that so many are now engaged in writing original stories as well as scenarios, directly for production.

There are so many concrete examples of this, one hesitates to enumerate: June Mathis, whose success as the scenario writer of "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" is so well known; Jeanie MacPherson, with the C. B. de Mille scenarios to her credit; Clara Beranger, Eve Unsell, Sada Cowan, Olga Printzlau, Rita Weiman, Katherine Hilliker, that clever title writer; Lois Weber, who is not only a writer, but a producer and director as well, proving her success by her continued activity.

Two of the most vital things in the world are home and money. And who has more to say than the woman, in regard to these paramount issues? In many homes of our country and others as well, the woman is the one to decide where each dollar is to go; the one who does the saving and makes the home a fact. Who then is more keenly alert to these things and more concerned regarding them? And how many scenes of home life are portrayed on the screen; the number is almost without limit.

The woman suffers the heart throbs for the world. The instinct of the creative makes her capable of the big, intuitive glimpses into the universal themes and situations that are so essential to stories. She is progressive, pioneering, and practically unafraid. Thus is she able to look ahead, feel the pulse of the universe, interpret to a big extent the demands of the public; feel what the public wants, even before the public realizes its own desires. And this is an invaluable trait in story writing, because even after a story is accepted, it is months before it finally is released, as a finished picture.

The Intuitive Glimpses

into universal themes—this is Woman's birthright, according to Agnes Parsons, co-author of "Riding With Death," and formerly Scenario Editor for the Fox West Coast Studios. Miss Parsons has recently achieved a marvelous success as a free lance.

The keynote to a story, and its primary purpose, translated to the screen through the scenario, is entertainment, whether it be to amuse or to pull at the heart strings, and give a different outlook on life. The majority of the audience is practically always, women and children. Here again, a woman succeeds, because she knows the subtle, appealing things which sometimes a man will overlook; the more intimate phases that bear so directly on her own life.

Woman's first and primeval instinct has been to please; either the male of the species, or children,—and to outwit her sister in being attractive. It is still her forte,—perhaps more vividly so than ever before.

In order to interest and entertain men, a woman must please them; and to please them, she must understand them. For personality can be no more briefly defined than this: the infinite capacity to understand. So, being an earnest student of men from the start, she is able to portray them faithfully in stories, even more than a man

may portray a man; if indeed she outgrows her limitations and really does understand them.

Also, she must know women, because she instinctively understands her own sex if she is at all the analyst. Besides, healthy competition in all walks of life inspires to keener grasp and greater wit!

What a chance a woman has, if she but realizes it and makes the best of all her faculties.

Eternal rivalry, the constant alertness for recognition, the desire for wholesome appreciation, the innate feminine craving to prove to men and women alike what she can do, these instinctive traits offer the woman unlimited opportunity in any great field of endeavor. More particularly, when it comes to story telling. For after all, what is a motion picture but a visualized story.

From the day the child can comprehend, it wants to be entertained. After all the games and plays and trials of the day are over, and sometimes even in the midst of them, what is more appealing to the little tad than to sit quietly by and listen to a story? And each age of development demands its stories,—even until the quite grown-up age arrives, when everyone begins more than ever to long for the Never-Grow-Up-Land!

The screen today presents unlimited channel for the outlet of the story builder,—as wholesome as it was when we sat before the old fireplace and listened to a dear one tell no matter how inconsequential a story. Think back. Who weaved most of those bedtime yarns? Mother, auntie, sister.

But a woman must look to her laurels to be successful in the future of screen writing. So many men in all branches of the business have the advantage of her. They delve into all the phases of picture building, where to a certain extent she is limited. Someone has said the property boy of today is the director of tomorrow.

Therefore, the woman who has a fair start in the writing end, must plunge further ahead in order to keep even and to stride still further. The successful writer is doing that today. The beginner, within or without the studio gates, must dig and delve and work and learn.

True, there are many phases of life a man may know better than a woman. But in nearly everything a man does today, a woman has an active part in it; in the biggest percentage of life a woman figures. Still, man has been trained from the very beginning to look at all phases of life and to study it. He has the opportunity of greater breadth of viewpoint in many ways.

Therefore, a woman can offset her weakness from that standpoint by conscientiously using her intimate knowledge of the details of life that a woman knows and realizes more than a man.

What was it made "Humoresque" such a great picture? The minute details which only a woman thinks of, and which Frances Marion remembered and used. And so subtly that the tears changed to smiles almost before one was conscious of it.

There are a hundred and one minor glimpses of life that to a man are unimportant, that mean so much to a woman; what the baby would do; how the maid should act; what clothes to wear on certain occasions.

The backgrounds or sets so important to pictures, nearly always demand the touch of the feminine hand, whether in the home or in business; only in remote cases is the atmosphere wholly masculine, and usually then, only in a certain part of the picture.

All these little bits of life, along with the bigger glimpses, coupled with a woman's sense of detail, when happily she can arrive at the point of not being a slave to it, enable a woman to weave the threads of a story by bringing into it all the elements that build to drama, human interest and heart interest. If she is attuned to the creative, she finds purpose,—and purpose is the backbone and background of every story ever written and produced that made for success.

Woman is emancipating herself, and in the process, because she lives for her sons as well as her daughters, she strives for that which will help and please both. This same argument applies to the woman, whether blessed with children or not; for the mothering instinct, when not satisfied with the precious burden of God's giving, mothers the world.

Because she is highly sensitive, she responds to the pulse of the world's suffering, and even as she seeks to alleviate it in a small way in the home, so she may strive in broader fields to offer means of constructive overcoming, which lends joy and spontaneity to humanity. She becomes a better student of life, and like a pioneer, would make her ideals practical.

The woman writer has a future in the motion picture industry, because she will make it for herself.

From Pen to Silversheet

By Malvin M. Riddle

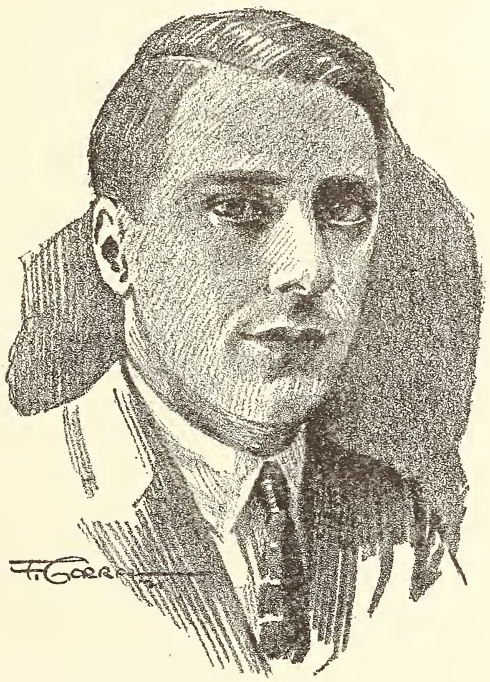
THE very first step in the production of a motion picture is the selection and preparation of the story. As explained in the foreword, a motion picture, in the early days, was merely a film record of some kind of motion. But in its present state of development, the motion picture is a drama or comedy, told by action and expression—ideas conveyed by means of expression, from the players to the audience.

The story, therefore, is paramount—the foundation upon which the picture is builded — the central idea of which the completed production is only an objectification.

The selection of this story, and its preparation for screening, is, therefore, of the utmost importance. If the story be weak, the picture will accordingly be more or less weak. The story must be selected with extreme care, keeping in mind its adaptability to the screen, and the pulse of the public taste at the time intended for the production of the picture.

There are two systems now in vogue in the production of film stories. These are the star system and the all-star or non-star system. If a story is to be chosen for a star, the story must of necessity be such that there is one character who stands out more than all the others—who predominates and holds the major portion of the interest. This character must be fitted in type and personality to the star for whom the story is intended.

In case the story is being selected for an all-star picture, it must be a story strong in theme and situation, in which all of the characters are important. There may be one who is slightly more important than the others, but not so much more so as in the case of the star picture. In a picture of this kind the story is to be the main issue and it is not presented with a view to the exploitation of any one character above all the others.



This is the first article in a series by Malvin M. Riddle of the Famous Players-Lasky organization. In the course of the series, every phase of motion picture production and distribution will be treated of, including set building, studio research, costuming, properties, casting of characters, make-up, direction, titling, and editing.

In the selection of their story, several fields are open to producers: Originals, written by outside contributors and sent to the studio for consideration; published novels, produced plays, published short fiction in current periodicals, and originals written by writers of proven reputation and ability, who have been especially engaged to write such photoplays. In the past few years, the tendency on the part of producers to use material from published plays, novels and short stories has been very strong, but now many entertain the conviction that the original is coming into its own. History repeats itself, and all things run in cycles, as if by a law of Nature. The same rule seems to apply in the case in point. Several years ago, nothing was produced but originals. Then came the tendency to produce plays, novels and

short stories—published or acted material. It seems that now the original is about to gain the floor again, not, however, because the other material has been exhausted.

As already noted, the originals come from two sources—outside contributors, the majority of whom are untrained amateurs who simply "try their hand" at writing a scenario without realizing the import of what they have undertaken, and from professional writers who were hitherto playwrights, novelists, or magazine short story writers.

At the Lasky studio, the Hollywood producing plant for Paramount Pictures, several noted writers are already actively engaged in writing original stories for production and Paramount release.

It will be seen from this that the original is coming into its own. Anyone who possesses talent, and who makes a diligent, conscientious study of the art of scenario writing, can write an acceptable scenario. The difficulty seems to be in convincing the amateur writer that scenario writing requires stud y and work, the same as the law, or the medical profession, or anything else worth while, and does not merely consist in sitting down for an hour or so, dashing off an idea, and sending it in to a studio with the expectation of realizing a sale.

A few years ago, successful authors, such as those mentioned above, were reluctant to write for the screen, or even to allow their works to be picturized. This was because, perhaps, of their lack of faith in the screen and the future of the motion picture industry, and also because of the fact that stories were then often "murdered" or mutilated beyond recognition by irresponsible producers. The status of the motion picture industry today, however, and the dignity of the profession is such that authors have been won over and have seriously considered the startling fact that whereas perhaps five hundred thousand people read a best seller, on the other hand, millions of people will see their story on the screen. These authors are working right in the studio where they can acquire the peculiar technique of writing for the screen and become accustomed to the requirements of this particular branch of literature.

After the selection or writing of the story comes its preparation for the director. Therein is involved the art of scenario or continuity writing. A motion picture must present ideas by action and expression, with the use of as few printed subtitles as possible. Therefore, the description or dialogue of the printed story or the dialogue of the play must be conveyed by other means. The scenic and character description of the novel is all absorbed in the settings, backgrounds actually filmed, lightings and effects, wardrobe and choice of types to play the roles. The scenario, therefore, must present the actual meat of the story, the vital ideas, situations and the theme of the story, through the actions and expressions of the players, who grasp the idea and then register it for the camera. The scenario "hits the high spots" as it were, showing only such scenes as are necessary, and implying all intervening action by the starting and finishing action of the scenes in question or by the use of fade-outs, fade-ins or subtitles.

For instance, if it is made clear that a man is going out of a house and down town for a certain purpose, if this is only incidental, it is not necessary to show the man leave the house, walk along the street, arrive at his destination down town, secure what he went after, get in his machine or catch his car back and arrive back at the house. It is only necessary to show his departure from the house, explaining in some way his purpose, and after a few intervening cut-backs, to show his return entrance.

In this scenario, all the factions of the story must be kept before the attention of the audience by the use of what is called the "cutback." For instance, after showing one sequence with one faction, the scene changes to another faction and advances them a bit further in the story.

The scenario is the backbone of the picture. It is a visualized record of what is to happen in each scene, set down in words and explained. A scenario for a feature production may vary in length all the way from two hundred and fifty to four or five hundred scenes. In this scenario, the motives, purposes and acts of the characters, explained in the novel by dialogue or narrative, and in the play by dialogue or soliloquy, must be expressed, so far as possible, by action and expression. Thus, the importance of the scenario, which is the connecting link between the original and the picture, may be realized.

After the scenario is completed by one of the scenario writers, or in some cases, by the author of the original in case he is numbered among those at the studio, many copies of this script are made, and one of these copies is given to the director, one to the star or principals, the various other studio departments, and the property man.

The director or assistant makes out what is known as a "scene plot," in which the scenes are grouped by number, each group being a list of the scenes in any one setting or at any one location. The scenario is studied by every department and it is upon this that the department bases the work it is to do in connection with the picture, and obtains definite ideas as to what is required of it.

In all of the larger motion picture plants, there is a regular department devoted to the story and scenario, and this is generally known as the "scenario department." At the Lasky studio this department has a very large personnel, including Frank L. Woods, chief supervising director, Thompson Buchanan, supervising director, Lee Dougherty, film editor, and his assistants, Miss F. M. MacConnell, the scenario reader, who reads and passes upon all outside contributions, several title writers, a number of scenario writers, and a host of clerical assistants, stenographers, cutters, etc., under the direction of Miss R. B. Miller, chief clerk.

In addition to several eminent authors, the screen staff includes Jeanie MacPherson, special scenarist for Cecil B. de Mille; Olga Printzlau, Walter Woods, Byron Morgan, Eugene B. Lewis, Frank Condon, Miss Frances Harmer, Beulah Marie Dix, Hazel Macdonald, Monte M. Katterjohn, Waldemar Young, Barbara Kent, Lorna Moon, Julia Crawford Ivers, E. A. Bingham, Jack Cunningham and Clara Beranger, all of whose names have been seen time and again upon the main titles of Paramount Pictures. The title staff is composed of Frank X. Finnegan, Robert Brown Holmes, Alfred Hustwick, and R. Beers Loos.

It has been the purpose of the foregoing to show the undoubted and growing importance of the story in film production and the manner in which it is handled and prepared for further treatment. It must be borne in mind, however, that motion picture production is a matter of cooperation. Without the most expert and painstaking efforts on the part of the many other departments and agents who contribute their artistic and mechanical skill to the main issue—the production of the picture, and a highly perfected organization, each cog working in perfect unison, there can be no adequate results. This will be realized as the importance and absolute necessity of each of these other departments is shown in subsequent articles of this series, each of which will deal, in detail, with one of these other phases.

(Continued in the January number)

The Author-Director

By Maxwell Fairfield

Leo Meehan and Henry McCarty are screen authors with a regular downtown office in Los Angeles, which means they are also business men. Perhaps that is why they recently convinced Charles W. Mack, of the Doubleday Production Company, that an author is the logical chap to direct the film production of his own mental vibration.

"We do not believe that every writer will make a first rate director, nor every director a worth-while writer," Meehan told me. "We simply believe that it is possible to acquire such a broad knowledge of screen production as to enable one gifted with picture story-telling ability to amply convey the meanings and shadings of that story to a cast of players and technical people. We do not believe with Charles Kenyon, however, that eventually most good film plays will be written, directed and edited by the same person. Only the man who understands composition, lighting, and setting as well as story values can become an author-director; and I am skeptical of any man being finally able to pass fair and reasonable editorial judgment on his own creation."

McCarty believes that the successful screen writer will never stray from his medium, because, he says: "The fellow who tries to mix in a little novel or short story writing will nullify or at least neutralize his photoplay-writing efforts. Why traverse two distinct avenues of expression? Meehan and I fear to become jacks of two trades and masters of neither. We believe sufficiently in the future of original screen fiction to cast our lot in that field, and to make a continuous, conscientious effort to master that art which is within our range."

They are at present directing Lester Cuneo and Mrs. Wallace Reid in one of their own stories, "Silver Spurs."

Romance and the Public

By Sid Grauman

I FEEL impelled to seek an audience at the hands of the screen writers of this country on the subject of "the kind of stories American picture-play patrons want."

Certainly that's a big subject and if any man had the right, true and infallible answer it isn't likely he'd give it away but would keep the secret to himself and grow fabulously, unspeakably rich in a year.

But there are certain elements in story fabrication that can be analyzed and discussed—certain broad principles of procedure that can be determined, and it is to these that I am going to address myself, for, as an exhibitor of pictures, it is quite as important to me as it is to you as writers, that the public tastes be gratified. Even less than you, can I afford to guess wrong. It wouldn't take many blunders to reduce the most affluent exhibitor in the United States to the necessity of finding a new job.

The trouble with most writers, it seems to me, is that they follow the leader. A picture is produced, let us say, and makes a great success. Immediately a flock of pictures similar in motive flood the film market. The writers forget that one of the big elements in the initial success was its NOVELTY. With this important quality missing necessarily from the imitations they are discredited to begin with and unless they present merits abundantly offsetting the lack of novelty they will be rebuked by the indifference of the public which is quick to detect insincerity and imitation in art.

When Shakespeare wrote that "all the world loves a lover," he knew what he was talking about; and the world hasn't changed. Romance is ever a theme of immediate appeal. Do not let yourselves be side-tracked into the sophisticated untruth that picture goers are tired of romantic stories; they may be tired of the way the stories are told but they are not weary with the theme. A study of the stories between covers, on the footlighted stage or on the screen that have lived longest and pleased most, will show that romance is the motive. Do not permit an occasional, isolated success achieved by satirical creations, delude you into the belief that the public taste runs to this, for it does not. Clean, healthy romance; youth at the spring; Romeo and Juliet, in modern life; the affections of the sexes, discreetly disclosed in modesty and good taste—these never fail to enchain the public, and youth and age alike rejoice in the triumph of true love.

Avoid the type of story in which that which you really mean as suggestive and perhaps vulgar is studiously contradicted by clever titles. This device does not fool the public any more and life of that kind is not worth repeating through the medium of any art.

Some vaudeville artists(?) are so insecure in their position that they have resort to smutty jokes to win the laugh that keeps the player employed. Avoid this type of story. If you can't come with clean hands from the creation of a plot, don't write it. Think of the effect it will have, if produced, on the minds of the young or the men and women of immature minds.

In telling a story be sure that the revelations you make of the "seamy side" of life are justified, necessary episodes, not merely dragged in to appeal to the morbid-minded. Since virtue must triumph over vice, and good must crush evil, it is needful, of course, that both phases of life be revealed. It is in the manner of the revealment that the artist is proven.

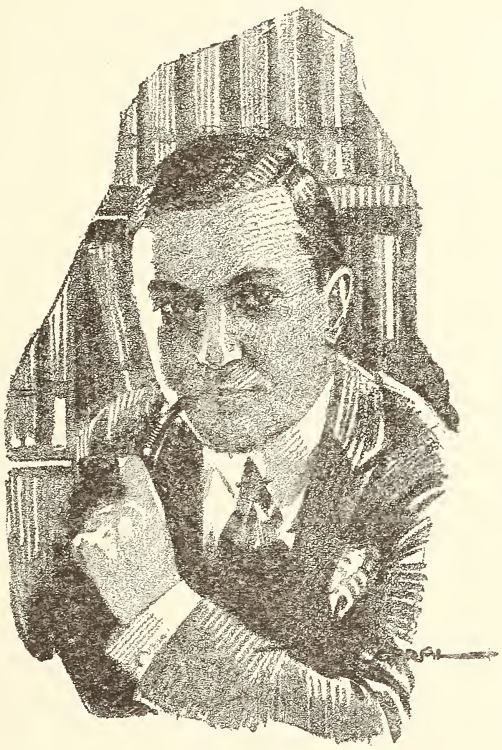
Sid Grauman Knows

the heart of the public. He is probably America's foremost motion picture exhibitor. His selection of photoplays and his methods of presenting them have attracted world-wide attention. He has made astounding successes of his Million Dollar Theatre and his Rialto Theatre, in Los Angeles, and is now building a three million dollar cinema playhouse.

Constructing the Scenario

By H. H. Van Loan

SOME years ago the residents of Paris were startled by the announcement that a Frenchman had perfected a couple of wings, which, when attached to the arms of an individual, and assisted by an up-and-down movement, would sustain him in his flight and enable him to compete with the birds of the air. In order to demonstrate the safety of his invention, the Frenchman mounted to the top of the Eiffel Tower one morning, and attaching the wings to his arms, jumped into space. I was one of those who arrived on the scene as they were picking up his lifeless body. The general verdict of those who knew him, was that he had merely wished to commit suicide in an original way: that the impracticableness of his invention had been pointed out to him and that death was assured if he attempted to test out his idea. They maintained that his sole object was to attract attention upon his demise and had thought out this original method of doing so. Why? Because it was different.



H. H. Van Loan is one of Filmdom's foremost photodramatists, having written such outstanding successful "originals" as "The Virgin of Stamboul," "The Great Redeemer," and "The New Moon."

Anything which is different, is original. Therefore, I desire to rise up now and decry that word "original" in connection with its use with screen stories. It is a grossly mis-used term as applied to the writing of stories, whether they be for the screen, magazine or stage. How many of the so-called "originals" are original? None. Very few things that are being done in the world today are original; most everything has been done before. This is especially true of stories. Show me the writer who is brave enough to submit his story to a producer with the statement that it is original. He may think it is, but, how can it be? I would not care to state that "Vive La France," "The New Moon," "The Virgin of Stamboul" or "The Great Redeemer" were original stories, because, they were based on fact, and, anything inspired by actuality cannot be original. In fact, almost every story I have written has been an elaboration of something which has really been enacted in real life; therefore, I consider none of them original. I think we should ban that word "original" from our moving picture parlance, and henceforth use the more appropriate word, "photoplay."

The editor of this magazine has asked me to give my views on the construction of the story. In order to do this, I may have to refer from time to time to that stern old teacher, Experience, and, I trust you will not think me vainglorious or immodest if occasionally I mention pictures of mine which have through some unexplained reason, or oversight on the part of the producers, reached the screen.

There are those who say that the producers are not making many pictures today possessing exceptional merit. If this is true, the writers are to blame. Why? Because the majority of photoplay authors are writing for salaries and are attached to the producing staffs of the various producers.

They have to write so many stories, or make so many adaptations in order to receive their pecuniary reward. What does this mean? It means they are writing under pressure. Does anyone do his best work this way? Absolutely not. The creative mind must not be forced, and, when it is, the results are inferior. Most of us are too much engrossed in going through the same old motions of our work. If we would sit down once in a while and see if we couldn't imagine better ones, then we would have better stories. Success is doing better than the other fellow, the thing you like to do best. And, if the photoplay author would devote more time, care and thought to his creations, it would soon spell doom to adaptations of plays and books. But, as long as the screen author is content to hold back his best work, just so long are we going to compel the producer to seek elsewhere for his material.

Successful screen writing is merely developing the power of imagination. The better you develop it, the better your story will be and the more money you will receive for your story. The success or failure of screen writing depends solely upon your ability to develop your imagination. Do not permit yourself to be bored by doing the same thing over and over again. If you do, then there is no pleasure in your work, and, unless you find pleasure in your work, you will not find success. Endeavor to make each story better than the last one, and, let each story you write be a supreme effort to produce something as nearly perfect as you possibly can make it. Imagination and concentration will accomplish all that you desire.

The collapse of a building is seldom due to its foundation. The cause is usually attributed to poor construction; faulty ironwork or weak walls. It is so with a story. The theme may be a good one, and worthy of sustaining a big, powerful drama, but, if the construction is weak, incoherent, and unconvincing, then the whole story collapses. If the author uses imagination in writing the story, and concentrates on each scene, each situation, and works them out to the best of his or her ability, there need be little worry about disposing of the script.

It is often said that all that is necessary is an idea. My experience has been to the contrary. A producer is interested in any good idea, but he is more interested in the way the author works out that idea. The theme may be an interesting one, but the producer is more concerned about the construction of the story, with the idea as a basis or foundation.

The first one to be sold on a story is the writer, himself. First, it must have a good theme. There must be a good reason for the story. With that as the foundation, work must then be started on the construction. After the story is completed the author should read it carefully. He must put himself in the place of the producer and try and imagine himself the prospective purchaser. If the completed manuscript is fool-proof, and is a really big, and meritorious piece of work, it will be sold. If the author tries to make his story "different," if it is based on a good theme, with plenty of atmosphere, tense situations, dramatic suspense, sufficient romance to flavor it, and considerable mystery and intrigue, all of which lead up to a strong climax, it will find a ready market.

Do not inject too much atmosphere. Too much atmosphere interrupts the plot and interferes with the smoothness of the story. Don't clutter up the script with a lot of scenes and things which have no direct bearing on the plot or the outcome of the story. These things will only delay the action and cause the picture to drag. There is no better cure for insomnia than a story which drags, and many good stories have been spoiled because the author tarried too long, and introduced an over-abundance of atmosphere, and bits of detail, which had no connection with the ultimate climax.

For example: I have just completed a story written around a matador of Spain, entitled "The Siren of Seville." The colorful background chosen for this story offered many possibilities for innumerable expensive "sets." The matador is a very picturesque character. He is a very heroic and romantic figure. The realization of this, together with the interesting customs of the Spanish people, especially the Sevilanos, provided a wealth of material for use in such a story. But, it was necessary to ignore everything which could not be conveniently interwoven into the plot of the story and not retard the progress of the picture. Pretty scenes mean nothing unless they are used as a background for action; beautiful shots are worthless if we are sacrificing interest in order to show them. Nothing should be permitted to check the progress of the story, and, no scene should be introduced unless it has a real important connection with the plot. In a story with

foreign atmosphere, the author must necessarily introduce the customs of its people, but he should never stop his story to do it. Have some of those customs play an important part in the plot of the story; so that while you are interesting and amusing the audience, you are instructing and educating them as well.

Take the audience with you. Confuse your characters, and lead the audience to believe it is being taken into your confidence. But surprise it at the right moment. Permit me to modestly refer to a situation in "The Virgin of Stamboul." Achmet Hamid returns to his harem and finds Resha, his favorite wife, in the arms of the American, Hector Barron. She locks the romantic lover in a closet. Hamid enters and asks her for the key. He then goes to the door of the closet, inserts the key, and even unlocks the door. When I reached this place in the story, I paused. Thus far, I had taken the audience into my confidence. I had taken it far enough. Now I must add some suspense. The audience would conclude that Hamid would open the door, permit Barron to come out and then thrash him; perhaps kill him. Well, as that was what the audience expected, I would inject the element of surprise. I would surprise the audience by surprising Resha. I would prevent Hamid from doing just the thing Resha believed he was going to do. Resha would be amazed. But, I wasn't thinking of Resha. I was thinking of my audience. In order to amaze my audience, I had to amaze Resha. The most dignified way of surprising the audience is through your characters. Never deliberately fool your audience. It isn't nice, and your audience doesn't like it.

Now then, I knew the audience would have at least one excuse for not going home yet. The cunning Hamid returned the key to Resha, and, apparently confessing his jealousy, expressed a desire to atone for his "fleeting doubt," and promised to bring her a gift, "one worthy of your cleverness, the most costly in all Stamboul." Again, the audience had a reason for remaining. Resha wondered what that gift would be. So did the audience. At this point I stopped work for two days. What would Hamid bring Resha for a present? I pondered over this for a long time. I must have him bring her something she would least expect; something the audience would least expect. Finally, it came to me. I would have Hamid kill Barron and bring her the blood-stained dagger! My purpose in doing this was two-fold: to have the audience wonder as to the nature of the punishment Hamid was to mete out to Hector Barron, and, the nature of the gift Resha was to receive. But, greater than all else, my object was, to keep the audience in the theatre by holding its attention and interest in this picture.

It is often true, that, during the writing of a story, the author will be traveling so fast towards the climax that he arrives there before he should. I realized this during the writing of the story I have just referred to. I brought Sari into the house where Hamid and Pemberton were fighting, and discovered I was rushing towards a climax which threatened to be usual and commonplace and not in keeping with the rest of the story. When I brought Sari to the center of the room, I had her look up at the ceiling, after the plaster had fallen, and then I stopped work for another day. There was only one climax to that story: Pemberton would come downstairs, after killing Hamid, take Sari in his arms, and then, finish. "Fine," I argued with myself, "but why not surprise Sari and the audience just once more?" Then I got it. The audience would be looking for Pemberton to descend the stairs to the room where Sari was waiting. All right. But I would delay his coming, and, meantime would bring the "Heavy," or Hamid down first, and lead them to believe Pemberton had been killed. Then, Hamid could drop dead at Sari's feet, as he is about to reach for her. After Sari and the audience had been surprised sufficiently, then I brought Pemberton down. A very small twist, but, exhibitors all over the country told me this was the biggest "punch" in the picture.

My only purpose in citing these experiences is to show how much more we can get out of our story if we will spend more time, care and thought. They will improve the construction. It is inadvisable to leave a situation until we are thoroughly convinced we have handled it to the best of our ability. My motto, when I come to a really important situation, is, to work it out exactly the way the audience least expects. The way this is done, is by rejecting ideas until you get the right one. In writing a photoplay the author should always keep in mind that the actor merely portrays the emotions the author seeks to arouse in the audience, and, unless the actor is given big dramatic situations to interpret, the emotions of the audience will remain unmoved.

The author knows when he is doing his best, for his emotions are the first to be aroused, and, if he gets no thrill as he writes he cannot expect the producer or the audience to receive what he has not put into the story. Nobody knows better than the author when he has done a good piece of work. And, when he has finished a good story, his judgment of values is capable of deciding whether the story will be sold. He may have to submit it to several producers before it will be accepted, but in the end he sees his work has finally been appreciated by at least one individual. If I ever sold a story to the first producer to whom I submitted it, I would believe the millenium had arrived. "The Virgin of Stamboul," "The New Moon," "The Great Redeemer," and the majority of my stories, made the usual call on nearly all the producers before they were accepted. One producer said that "The Virgin of Stamboul" was a costume picture, and would not be received by the public; another turned down "The New Moon" because it was an attack on the anarchists; and a third said "The Great Redeemer" would offend the various religious creeds. All of these predictions proved wrong, in the end.

I am in favor of the type of story which starts right out with mystery and suspense, and which holds the interest of the audience until the end. For this reason, I like to write crook stories. There's lots of fun in writing a story of this nature, and I get plenty of enjoyment out of creating them. I have often started a story of this sort and didn't have the slightest idea where I was going or how all the mystery was going to be smoothed out in the end. That's where the fun came in. In fact, I maintain that an author, if he takes his work seriously, gets more enjoyment out of a story than anyone else, and, after he has spent five or six weeks living with the characters he is pleased to be relieved of their company.

In connection with the construction of a story, let me give you an idea as to how I developed one recently. About a year ago, I awoke one morning, after a remarkable nightmare, with cold perspiration oozing out of my brow. In my sleep, I had killed a man, and it was so realistic that I recalled all the horrid details for a day or two afterwards. But, before I go on, let me state right here, that I am one of those who believe we who write are often given messages to embellish and elaborate upon before presenting them to the world. If we train our powers of perception we will not often permit these messages to pass by unnoticed. I also believe that ideas travel in circles, and, if we do not accept the inspiration when it comes, and immediately seek to make use of it, we will find that someone more ambitious than ourselves will utilize it, much to our regret later.

The atrocious crime, which my subconscious self had committed, seemed to suggest a story. So, I began pondering over this dream, to see what I could get out of it. I would write a story, wherein the hero would dream that he had killed a man who was a total stranger to him. Then, the next morning, the hero would read in the newspaper that a man had been murdered the night before, in exactly the same manner. The police would be baffled as to who committed the murder. The hero would go to the police and confess that he was the guilty man. No, that wouldn't do; that would be stretching fiction a little too far. I continued building and tearing down, until finally, a few days later, I had constructed the following story:

An eminent surgeon returned home, after several weeks sojourn, several hundred miles away, and retired. He dreams that he killed his worst enemy, and awakes in a most troubled frame of mind. A dog barking, in another part of the house, arouses him from his nightmare, and, believing there are burglars about, he puts on his dressing-gown, and going downstairs, takes a revolver from a drawer of a table in the hall, and starts searching the rooms. As he enters the library he stumbles, and the gun is discharged. He turns on the light and finds the body of the man he dreamed he had killed, lying on the floor of his library. Did he kill him? If so, did he kill him in his sleep or did he shoot him as he entered the library? That is the question which I asked my audience by having my hero ask the same question of himself. In order to keep the audience in the theatre, I do not answer the question until the last scene in the picture. So, those who have seen "Bring Him In," which was released a month or two ago, saw a story which was inspired by a dream, or nightmare the author had a year before.

(Continued in the January number)

This Side of Nirvana

By Ted Le Berthon

Burton Rascoe's Article

I have always believed that fools enter where angels fear to tread; but often in moments of droll, though somewhat poignant reflection, a dark veil lifts, the spirit of the Cosmos chuckles ominously back of my shoulder, and the bitter revelation of the "low-down," the sub-conscious urge, the true motive, stares at me horribly. Try as I may, by whatever process of ratiocination, I cannot avoid the monstrous truth: the angels would like to be fools—for a while at least—and are very, very jealous of fools. True, angels prefer that all adhere to angelic conventions, but sometimes fools seem to be having such a wonderfully gay season of Life that the angels begin to doubt themselves. What happens then? Well, what happens whenever one is jealous or fearful of anyone or any class? What happens when the dusty, bookish angels find themselves outnumbered by earthbound and vulgarity-bound fools? What happens when it is somehow tragically sensed that the fools have a little wisdom and much wit, despite their lack of classified and catalogued knowledge—when fools joust with intellectual seraphs, when what Herr Nietzsche terms *the pathos of distance* is seemingly spanned?

An angel by the name of Burton Rascoe, in the November number of THE BOOKMAN, writes a most convincing and irrefutable article damning the motion picture of today; he has marshalled his facts in an impenetrable mass formation. Yet even the attaining of angelic stature is within the realms of limitation, and I fear that Mr. Rascoe, like the rest of us absurd and ridiculous finites, lives most of his days and nights in the Halls of Illusion. Life, like an opiate, has lulled him to pleasant dreams, from which—even as you and I—he only occasionally awakes.

In this dream state, so accurately described by Mark Twain in "The Mysterious Stranger," and by James Branch Cabell in "Jurgen,' 'one is often entirely engrossed in the loving or slaying of phantoms; one is often actually slain in turn by Time while lolling in the humorless fields of some fabulous, quixotic Dreamland. In this state, one becomes easily aroused to frenzies over inconsequential things, forgetting or foregoing the grand perspective of Eternity. In this state ,one is apt to become "het up" about such things as art and industry, and to actually separate and minutely define them. This is, of course, a bit of irony on the part of the Cosmic jester.

Mr. Rascoe in his article damns the motion pictures from Hades to breakfast. But *why* the note of rage? *Why* the hysteria, the calling of names, the sticks-and-stones attitude? Instead of calling scenario writers "the backwash of literature," directors "vain-glorious," and actors "strutting pomade addicts," thereby weakening some otherwise sound argument, why didn't Mr. Rascoe remain "the gentleman" by employing the aristocratic weapon of silence? He could have thus asserted his contempt, without descending to the grosser vibrations and so betraying his innate jealousy of fools.

Only a bigoted ass would assert that the motion picture has produced any work of Art of unusual significance, or that at its heights it has approached the masterpieces of the drama and the printed word. But scenario-writing is a few years old; there has hardly been time enough to develop any Molieres, or Rostands—or Eugene O'Neills! Our playwrights and fictionists are the result of long evolution, with much tradition and example to build upon, whereas motion picture writers ,directors, actors, and cinematographers are still experimenting—or being experimented with.

The grave trouble with Mr. Rascoe is that he really wants a millenium, where his brothers and sisters of the human race will all appreciate Bach, Beethoven, Sophocles, Aristophanes—and Burton Rascoe. He has not glimpsed or at least fastened upon the fact that he is only aware of the importance of his likes—which are himself—because he is able to look down upon the likes of others. (Again I feel indebted to Herr Nietzsche's "pathos of distance.") Therefore, for the intellectuals to become conscious of themselves the presence of the anaesthetic masses is required—for contrast.

Mr. Rascoe and all other intellectuals should root out their damnable jealousy and

substitute an attempt at understanding or even pity—which is on the borderland of revelation. It is a fact that in all ages a great majority of folks have admired and loved things simple, sentimental ,or obvious. No matter what strides the motion pictures make, there will always be a demand for photoplays which match the average comprehension, just as there will always be a demand for such songs as Gus Edwards composes and such novels as Harold Bell Wright achieves.

As to what is art or what is not art, I would refer Mr. Rascoe to the dialogues of Nagasena. I do not believe anyone capable of proclaiming where art begins and where it leaves off. Even among the self-conceded intelligentsia, two "authoritative" critics have been known to pass diametrically opposed judgments upon a tome or a painting or a musical composition. Straddling space is preferable to such mental acrobatics.

After all, Rascoe's attitude is an expression of class-consciousness. He wants only that called Art which he and his class can respond to with respect or reverence. But he must never overlook the fact that there are millions of souls who find beauty in things which he derides, who laugh where he sneers, who weep at things which would bore him.

Many things Mr. Rascoe says about economic conditions as determinants of photoplay production are unquestionably sound. Perhaps in some quarter a finer artistic consciousness will be aroused which will function—so that the few as well as the many may be entertained, cinematically speaking.

However, it is always just as important and probably more important, that the masses be entertained and instructed with photoplays they can understand and enjoy. While it is untrue that the motion picture field, to quote Mr. Rascoe, "is held at present by ex-chauffeurs and ex-scene shifters," it is quite probable that these fellows speak the language of the masses, that they have it in their power to make millions of people laugh, cry, and think, who would fall asleep during "The Last Night of Don Juan."

There is a deeper law than economics which causes all forms of entertainment and instruction to be levelled for the most part to the many rather than the few. The many will not be overlooked while the few are being catered to; and the many are congenitally unable to rise to the concepts of the few.

Paradoxically enough, Mr. Rascoe—of the intelligentsia—childishly refuses to be perturbed by movie censorship because the movie magnates and the press did not cry out against the suppressions of Dreiser's "The Genius" or Cabell's "Jurgen," or against the impounding of "The Little Review," "The New York Call" or "The Liberator." Poor Mr. Rascoe, don't you realize that ninety per cent of the movie magnates and editors never heard of the above books or publications, much less of their being suppressed or impounded?

How does Mr. Rascoe expect the motion picture to evolve to an art if it is to be circumscribed by moralists? Suppose, to terminate futile argument on both sides, that we would plead guilty to his accusation that the motion pictures are today an industry, not an art? How about all our tomorrows? And doesn't Mr. Rascoe realize that if the moralists censor movies, they'll later go after literature and the drama? Isn't there a common cause here?

The request made in these columns last month for comment from students of screen writing has brought a generous response. Therefore, commencing with the January *Photodramatist,* we will devote one page a month to the student writer under the caption: *The Student Writers' Rostrum.*

This page will contain short paragraphs of comment, both of the brickbat and the bouquet species. Any student of photoplay writing may here discuss any phase of the motion picture art-industry *briefly* over his signature. We will print initials where requested but must always know whose initials they are.

Several excellent articles of length possessing considerable merit were also received from student writers following the November request. They will be printed in the next several numbers.



THE unsuccessful screen writer is almost invariably the chap who is uncertain as to just what he is writing about. He lacks conviction.



FAME is something all true artists seek to overcome.

Reading Your Scenarios

By Bryan Irvine

(Continued from the November number)

IF there is not a problem of some kind in a story, what is to hold the interest? If we know how the end will come, why should we care to sit through several reels and wait for it? In writing a photoplay plot you should never give yourself the easy way out. To do so makes the story obvious. Do not follow the lines of least resistance. Get your characters in a complication of circumstances that will tax your own ingenuity to extricate them. If you have no real problem to solve—and solve logically—in creating a plot, you have given the scenario reader and the audience—if the plot ever reaches an audience—something that they can see through as easily as you did. Staff readers go through thousands of stories like this. They fail to hold the interest. Too many authors are prone to twist their characters into a really good and complicated plot that keeps one guessing as to the outcome, then take the easy way out, thus robbing the story of strength, suspense, conflict and real plot. Too many authors go with their characters into a real good situation and stop there. They are through. They have reached the limit of their ingenuity. What happens then? They kill off one objectionable character with the good old bronze statue or have a heavy automobile run him down. Usually this unhappy villain lives just long enough to confess all his sins so that all the others may get from under suspicion, misunderstandings and live hap—.

How, then, are these stories to be worked out properly? Easy; just end your story in an original way, then work it out backwards.

When aspiring writers begin to realize that producers are not hankering to pay out money for the story in which every situation is brought about by the simple expedient of one character overhearing the conversation of another character, those writers will be taking one step forward—a short step, to be sure—as photodramatists—incidentally, they will be doing the tired-eyed reader a great service. Of all the forms of crudeness in the work of new writers this is a most persistent and distasteful one—hanging the plot on a conversation that is overheard by some one for whose ears it was not intended, then carrying on by more eavesdropping scenes. Anybody can create a situation if that is all there is to it; but what do these alleged situations amount to? It is one of the easy, weak, follow-the - lines - of - least-resistance methods of new writers — very often the old writers —whose creative powers are stunted or who are too lazy to create a situation based on subtlety, interest - sustaining intrigue, or any one of a number of good and more or less original ways.

> **"Characterization** must come out in the action. If it comes out solely in dialogue it is not screen material," says Bryan Irvine of the Thomas H. Ince Scenario Staff Readers, in this concluding article. He also warns against screen writers ending stories in "the easiest way."

We will not mention the scores of stories that come from persons who are taking a chance shot at it selling. Everybody, even the writers, know that the studios where nothing but melodrama, drama, and comedy-drama are produced, all present-day ideas, constantly receive stories written for slapstick artists. At the studio where nothing but slapstick is produced, are received heavy drama and melodrama from writers who are taking a chance at a sale. If writers would only study the type of stories being produced at certain studios, then stick to that type, they would save much postage and be respected much more by the readers.

Comes now the letter from the budding author who says: "This is a true story. The incidents mentioned in this story ac-

tually happened in my home town." The reader usually finds such stories "all incident," and they are so obvious and commonplace that he never doubts the veracity of the writer.

Why do so many writers precede their stories with a ponderous essay under the caption of "theme?" I don't know. Anyway, they do; they give us a theme, then sail into the story at fever heat and forget all about the beautifully-worded theme. The reader sifts the plot, explores about between the lines, scratches his dome in perplexity, but the pretty "theme" fails to appear—simply slipped out of the story in the beginning and beat it. All of which causes a reader to wonder why the author bothered with a theme in the first place. Theme is easily expressed in words, but to get it over in action is a different matter, and not an easy task. Theme is easily thought of, but how few of them bring it out in their action story. The real craftsman in the scenario-writing game says nothing about his theme. He brings it out in his characters, their actions, the plot, the denouement. A reader has a great deal of respect for the writer who can make his theme plain in the story without telling us all about it in a sermon before he starts the story.

Theme is very much in the same hazy class as characterization in the minds of many writers. Characterization is woefully neglected by the novice. For example, a man who is characterized in the beginning of the story as one who is heartless, grasping, fearless, relentless, should remain so throughout the story, or at least be reasonably consistent. But no; the character mentioned is very apt to slump into maudlin sentimentalism or unexpectedly develop attributes entirely foreign to his character. This inconsistency deprives a character of strength; it renders him unconvincing, hazy, unnatural.

The writer who can "get" the reader is the one who can make his characters real human beings who do real human things consistent with real human emotions. The real writer or thinker who wants to arouse emotion never resorts to the crude and depressing scene in which the poor little orphan girl weeps over her mother's grave. Neither do these writers ring in the scene in which the American flag is waving in the breeze, merely to shake the audience to applause. If the flag is necessary in the story, if its use is consistently and logically linked up with the plot, that, of course, is a different matter. There is a very fine line of demarcation between pathos and morbidness; there is a heavier line between real humor or comedy and its counterfeit—clown stuff.

"Why," asks the popular short-story writer or novelist, "did that published masterpiece of mine fail to impress the scenario editors?" There are dozens of answers to this question, depending on the "masterpiece." I firmly believe that more published stories fall down before the humble reader's eyes than do the synopses written by the butcher, the baker, or the candlestick maker who have never written for publication and who are, in many cases, blissfully ignorant of rhetoric or the common rules of composition. The elements of a good piece of printed fiction are very often the very elements not wanted in the photoplay. It is infinitely easier to sustain suspense and interest in the written word than to logically sustain it in the action or screen story. A great majority of the fiction writers do not seem to realize that their published story, if it has any screen or picture value at all, must be turned inside out or upside down to make a good screen adaptation.

The novelist or short-story writer may dash off several columns of highbrow characterization and get his price per word from the magazine publisher. All this is useless to the producer. He cannot make several reels of sub-titles merely to get your fine characterization over. Characterization must come out in the action. If it has come out solely in dialogue in your published work it is not screen material for that reason; your story simply hasn't the screen angle. The plot may progress logically and convincingly in the written story; but, visualizing it as it is written, would it be logical, convincing, and interesting? In most cases it would not. Therefore, if the fiction writer hopes to sell his screen rights he must visualize his story before he writes it in much the same way the continuity writer visualizes it to make the screen version. He must keep the screen in mind from beginning to end. Your climax in your written story may be well concealed and approached in such a way as to bring it out unexpectedly and effectively. Have you studied it closely from the screen angle? Could it be handled in pictures so as to make it as interesting as it was in the written story?

Developing the screen angle is not so easy as it sounds. This has been proven to many

novelists and magazine writers who failed to recognize the screen version of the published story. This is the reason many vain fiction writers "kicked like bay steers" because their story did not appear on the screen just as it had been written for the magazine. Who is better qualified to pictureize a published story than the trained continuity writer? He knows what is wanted in the story to make it a screen success. Though it hurt like the very deuce he was forced to "cut" your pet situation in that published story. He knows what elements were lacking in the published work and he had to inject those elements, creating them himself. He knew why your so-called climax or your nice little counterplot would not "go over" on the screen as it had in print. Therefore, he had to shake your story up, start it from the middle and otherwise disregard your pet rules of fiction writing.

What do the producers want? This question is covered very nicely by Mr. Thos. H. Ince of the Ince Studios. Mr. Ince says:

"Although I can only speak from personal knowledge, I think this can be accepted as a guide to the requirements of the principal producers at this time.

"There *is* a demand for interesting screen stories; but these stories should be constructed with special reference to their transference to the screen. Through our film medium we can only interpret life through pictures and in this way, while at certain points, we are in touch with narrative fiction or dramatic form, at others we are widely distinct. We have, by the nature of our process, to translate emotion in terms of action. This action must be sustained, incessant, and coherent. We are *showing* not *explaining* them, and we are deprived of most of the resources of fiction and nearly all of the conventions of the stage. This appeal is first to the eye and through the eye to the mind and soul. We are deprived of the aid of introspection and intricate character analysis, and must establish our characterizations instantly and obviously, and we are divorced from the greatest factor of the stage—the voice, with its subtle inflections and intonations that conceal so many deficiencies in the spoken drama.

"We, the producers, have been compelled by the limitations of our medium to create an entirely new technic differing in essentials from the fiction form or the stage form of delineations. We have, through years of experience and experiment, created a distinct school or art expression suited to our needs, and we have, in the course of these years, brought into existence and trained experts whose special skill is devoted to the furtherance of this idea.

"We have also enlisted the aid of most of the greatest writers and dramatists of our time and have gradually directed their sympathies towards this vehicle. You will see, therefore, that the unversed writer meets with a far keener competition in this field than in general literature, as it takes ardous study to bend a natural literary talent to the peculiar restrictions of the screen drama. Indeed, I may add that many of the greatest writers of today, both in drama and in fiction, often utterly fail to meet these requirements.

"In compensation the untrained writer has just as much chance as the tried veteran in other branches of literature, as the producers are looking for screen drama and not for fine literature or eloquent rhetoric. He is in the market for ideas that are screenable, preferably dealing with American life, keenly and truthfully observed and easily recognizable by the masses who form our unlimited audiences. He is not looking for propaganda of any sort, platitudinous moralizing, spurious uplifts or anything that turns a medium devoted to wholesome entertainment of all sorts and conditions of men into a pulpit or rostrum.

"Give us more of life, more of truth, more freshness and less reiteration of worn-out themes that have outlived their usefulness.

"In the hundreds of scripts that are submitted to us each week, one that contains the gleam of a new idea treated with originality and insight commands at once my respectful consideration."

The last paragraph covers a most important point for the consideration of authors. How very few scripts have in them the gleam of an new idea! If the reader does not know a new idea when he reads it he will not long be a reader. These new ideas cannot come from a "rehash" of old ideas. Neither are they born in the minds of those who turn out scripts like a mill. A good story requires thought and study. It must be studied from every angle.

Give the reader credit for having some sense. Several weks ago we read a "Boston Blackie" story written by some "wise" boy in the middle west. It was recognized immediately by the reader who gave it the "once over." There it was, word for word, incident for incident, just as the real au-

thor had written it for magazine publication; there it was, "lifted" bodily by some guy who evidently believes that the ordinary staff reader has just left grammar school. Many published magazine stories and novels are rewritten by persons and fired at the producer. None of them ever sell unless the original author or his agent submits them. It can't be done. Just a warning, you know, to those who are prone to copy now and then.

One man in Missouri was not convinced of this fact until he had submitted thirty-six stories in one month. Still, they say a Missourian must be shown. He was shown, and he writes no more.

In conclusion, lay off the insanity stuff, the heavy and objectionable sex stuff, keep your characters in one place as much as possible instead of scattering them all over the globe, *study* the screen and try, try again.



First Principles

By Mildred Considine
Noted Photodramatist

I HAVE been asked on numerous occasions where I get my ideas for moving picture stories. The answer is a comparatively simple one.

The life around us furnishes us with all the material we need for photoplays. But we have to keep our eyes and ears open, and give our imagination full sway without permitting it to wander aimlessly. Over-indulgence of the visionary forces is apt to lead us into a dangerous pitfall. It is a rarity to stumble onto a complete story all ready for us. Usually it is an unusual situation or characterization that attracts our interest in the first place. It may be merely a theme. Using any of these as a point of departure, we build our plots from the elements which fit in with the premise we have chosen. We garnish the fundamental structure, as it were, with the fabrics of our imagination, building up to and away from our original starting point with purely fictionized happenings, which we must be careful to keep within the bounds of logic. And in this construction process we must be careful to take our patterns from the people around us, giving our characters the speech, mannerisms and activities of their counterparts in real life.

This, of course, means study of the broadest kind, and the wider our field of observation, the more logical does our process of construction become. There must always be a close relationship between the two—observation and construction—to eliminate the improbable deductions which our imagination is apt to make without the clarifying effects of a keen insight into human nature.

If you have a broad knowledge of human nature—a good imagination—perfect control of that imagination—courage to meet disappointments without permitting them to embitter or vanquish you—a sense of humor to use in your stories and to help you to laugh at yourself when you face mistakes—and the ability to adapt your disappointments and mistakes into suitable material for use in your stories—the rest is comparatively easy. All you have to do is to write the photoplays; they'll sell.



THE Master Photodrama, when it comes, will not attempt to prove anything. It will be its own proof.



IF the theory of re-incarnation is deemed plausible, might it not be that the Censors of today are re-incarnated Inquisitors?



THE student writers of today are the hope of tomorrow; and the student writers of 1950 will be the hope of 1955.

The Un-Eminent Author

By B. P. Schulberg

THE un-eminent author is coming into his own.

For the past few years exhibitors have been having dinned into their ears propaganda in behalf of the eminent authors and great authors, and then in turn, through their newspaper advertisements, the slides on their screens, and their billboards, have impressed on the public how privileged they were to see pictures supervised by a famous novelist or a well known playwright.

The public came, saw, and went away disappointed.

Somehow or other the films did not show the characters of the novels just as they had pictured them, and in numerous instances such radical changes had been made in plot construction that were it not for the formal introduction accorded them by the main titles and the preliminary advertising, they would not have recognized their old friends of the fiction world.

The stage plays also had to be altered and elaborated to meet the needs of the screen for rarely is there found in any three or four act drama, comedy drama or comedy enough "meat" to stretch through from 4300 to 6800 feet of film.

Writing for the screen is a distinct art for the motion picture is a distinct medium. There is no more reason why a great playwright or a novelist should write an exceptional motion picture story, than that a famous sculptor should be able to create an exceptional oil painting. Some sculptors endowed by nature with a talent for both arts have been able to do this, just as in a few isolated instances certain playwrights and novelists have scored successes in the scenario world.

Unless a sculptor learns oils, however, he could no more hope to make a great painting, than can a great playwright produce a great motion picture scenario without an extensive knowledge of the art. It is true, however, that the playwright and the novelist have a big jump on the amateur writer, because they have learned to think in terms of characters and dramatic values.

In writing for the screen, it is the idea that counts. Words mean nothing. An elaborate chapter of description by a famous author can easily be condensed into a page of suggestions from which the technical director could reproduce the ideas of the writer just as effectively. Ninety per cent of the clever comic or dynamic dialogue from which dramas, comedy dramas or comedies derive their punch is useless on the screen for an analysis shows that the more successful photodramas have never surfeited with wordy sub-titles, but have depended on the action to get over the story.

The director builds his production much as the contractor and the construction engineer erect a building. The scenario writer is an architect. Just as the higher class constructionists in the building world are able to improve on the architect's plans by suggestions gained from their experience in building, so the abler directors are capable of improving on the scenarios submitted to them.

The more successful directors use flexible scenarios so that they can inject their own personality and individuality into the story and can draw on their experience as photoplay producers for little details with which the author is unfamiliar.

It is a fact that the really big pictures have been written by men and women who are familiar with the screen, versed in both the limitations and possibilities of the camera. Outsiders do not realize the limi-

The First Thirty-eight

Famous Players Productions, made eleven years ago, were based on stories written by B. P. Schulberg. Later, together with Wm. G. McAdoo and Hiram Abrams, he organized the United Artists. Today he is President of Preferred Pictures, Inc., starring Katherine MacDonald.

tations nor have they any conception of the possibilities which depend on the cinematographer.

I believe that the successful scenario writer of the future will be recruited from the ranks of the vast horde of working newspapermen, who are trying their hand at magazine fiction. The journalists who are doing this have acquired a vast knowledge of human interest values from their years of newspaper work and have learned this from months spent in the police stations, the courts and big gatherings where mob psychology always was prone to assert itself. Through their fiction work they have acquired story values. We find that the newspaper and fiction experience can be linked together to make a successful photoplay writer.

In my own experience as a producer I believe I have discovered a man of this type, Charles A. Logue, a newspaperman who has spent his spare hours in the creation of fiction. He is the type of man I believe will make a big picture of the future. He is the type who will become a combination of author and director, because in the picture making of the future it will be hard to see where the author's work stops and the director's work begins.

Logue, I am sure, is destined to become famous in the pictures. He wrote "The Infidel," the Katherine MacDonald picture upon which we are now working, and I have retained him at the studio to collaborate with James Young, the director, and Joseph Brotherton, cinematographer. Brotherton is enthusiastic over Logue's prospects, because he says he is one of the few men outside of the field of cinematography who understands and appreciates light and color values.

Understand me—I have no axe to wield on the necks of the eminent authors, for their coming to the screen has meant considerable in cinema development even if the only thing gained is the knowledge that playwrights and novelists of today are not destined to become the scenarists of tomorrow. One of them, however, has been successful. I refer to Rupert Hughes, whose pictures, "The Old Nest" and "Dangerous Curve Ahead," for instance, have been as near perfect as any photoplays can be. Mr. Hughes has found he could work in the scenario medium as well as he could juggle type. But to my mind the average eminent author has been a hindrance rather than a help. Undoubtedly he has contributed something, but on the other hand a world of time, talent and negative film has been wasted in attempting to teach him to write for the screen as successfuly as he did for the book publisher or the footlights.



Revelation

Fred Myton, Realart scenarist, has interesting tales to tell of picture making in New York. In one of his scripts he wrote some scenes to be made in the Grand Central station.

"Oh," they told him, "we can't make scenes in the Grand Central!" And then they told him why.

It seems that a film company went down there and took scenes of people—their actors and others—alighting from a train. Among the unpaid "atmosphere" was a man with a woman who was not his wife.

But wifey saw the picture, recognized hubby and the strange woman and entered suit for divorce. Irate hubby sued the film company—and recovered! The railroad had a lot of annoyance in the matter.

Ergo, no pictures in railroad stations!



Gossip Street

From Hollywood Boulevard to Times Square

Beatrice Van has written an original photoplay for Doris May under the title of "Boy Crazy." According to Hunt Stromberg, the producer who is starring Miss May, "Boy Crazy" represents the highest type of comedy drama. Miss Van has also written the continuity, a fact which augurs well for the finished production, as her craftsmanship in this respect is recognized as being second to none. Professional screen writers who have watched her work during the past several years appreciate her almost uncanny feel for essentials; and directors value her work for the intelligent construction which makes for economy of film footage. William Seiter will direct "Boy Crazy." Miss Van has also recently completed the adaptation of "Eden and Return," also to be used as a vehicle for Doris May.

Skin Deep

Thomas H. Ince announces the early release of "Skin Deep," an original by Marc Edmond Jones featuring Florence Vidor and Milton Sills.

Drago's Original

Frank Mayo is soon to be starred by Universal in "Out of the Silent North," an original by Drago.

Si Snyder is Editor

Silas E. Snyder, one of the most thoughtful and excellent writers in the west, has become editor of The American Cinematographer, official organ of the A. S. C.

Lois Zellner

Lois Zellner, who has written one of the best originals ever screened, is writing the continuity of "My Boy," to feature Jackie Coogan.

Originals

Francis Camden, late of the U. S. Navy, has just sold his first scenario to Jackie Coogan for $2000. Camden had no literary background or previous experience, turning to screen writing after having his shoulder dislocated in the World War. Clara Beranger has just written an original upon which William de Mille will soon start production. Byron Morgan has just written an original for Wallace Reid entitled "Across the Continent." Aubrey Stauffer has broken into authorship with an original for Constance Binney, which went into production last week. Olga Printzlau's latest original is May McAvoy's vehicle, which Major Maurice Campbell is directing. Leigh Wyant, an actress who played "Beauty" in the New York stage production of "Experience," has just sold an original to Realart. Gouverneur Morris, erstwhile novelist, has written an original in which Helen Jerome Eddy will be starred, entitled "Always Warm and Green."

Payne with Realart

Will Payne, noted writer of short stories and novels, is the latest literary luminary to join the Realart Scenario Staff.

Statter Signs

Another scenario writer whose past work guarantees excellence and whose understanding of many phases of life assure the "human touch," has been added to the staff of Lucien Hubbard at Universal City.

Arthur Statter was formerly a member of the Universal continuity staff four or five years ago. Since then he has been associated with Ince, Jesse B. Hampton, Goldwyn and Lasky's.

A Likely Son

Lloyd Bacon, son of Frank Bacon, star of "Lightnin'," is busy at the Brunton studio writing stories for Lloyd Hamilton.

Sullivan Original

C. Gardner Sullivan is completing an original story which is soon to enter production under the direction of Irvin Willat.

Holubar's Big Plans

Allen Holubar announces that the title of his next production will be "The Soul Seeker." Dorothy Phillips will be starred in Professor Holubar's new play which will be made at the United Studios.

"The Soul Seeker" will be the first of a series of productions which Mr. Holubar will make for First National release, in all of which Dorothy Phillips will play the leading feminine role.

While in New York Mr. Holubar bought a foreign "original" which will also be produced in Los Angeles. An option on two other photoplays also was secured by Mr. Holubar.

Melford Honored

George Melford, Paramount producer, has been signally honored by being proposed for overseas membership in the Authors' Club of London, England, by Sir Gilbert Parker. The information was conveyed to Mr. Melford in a letter from the secretary of the famous club.

Thomas Hardy, O. M., LL. D., is president of the general council of the Authors' Club, and Rt. Hon. Sir Gilbert Parker, who recently spent several months at the Lasky studio here, is chairman of the executive committee.

Practically all the foremost writers of Britain are members of the organization. Needless to say, George is delighted with his new honor.

Victor Herbert!

Now the names of famous musicians are connected with the movies. The latest is Victor Herbert. He is going to lead the orchestra at the Strand, a New York movie house.

Hopkins with Realart

Greatly increased production at the Realart studio has made it necessary for Supervising Director Elmer Harris to add still another scenario writer to his constantly growing staff.

The new comer is Thomas J. Hopkins, who entered motion pictures four years ago as a scenarist for Ince, later working for Neal Hart, Henry Walthall, and Selznick.

Hopkins is a native of Chicago, and enjoyed a successful career as an engineer before entering pictures.

Wray Refuses Europe

John Griffith Wray, who directed "Hail The Woman" for Thomas H. Ince, which will be shown shortly in the city, has had two offers to go to Europe to produce pictures. Wray, however, is one of the coterie who are not in favor of leaving the United States to develop the art of the screen.

Praise from Berlin

According to advices just received here, the first American feature photoplay to be exhibited in Berlin after the recent lifting of the export film embargo was "The Virgin of Stamboul," which was written by H. H. Van Loan. The picture opened in the Marmor house, one of the leading theaters of Berlin. Tod Browning directed it to a roaring success and Priscilla Dean was star.

In commenting on the continuity, which was by William Parker, the Berlin Mittag said that the technique equalled, and in some instances surpassed, that of the best dramatists of Europe. Continuing, the Mittag says:

"The most startling part of the film is the photographical picturesque feeling of the American cameraman for continually surprising and developing new lines of action."

The Abendblatt says: "Here is actually shown a film which grips the masses, and from its first picture until the very last scenes is entertaining."

Back to Scotland

Lorna Moon, who has been rattling the typewriter as story writer for Cecil de Mille for several months past, is leaving for a visit to her native Scotland. She expects to be gone several months.

Miss Moon has written a number of original stories for Wallace Reid and Gloria Swanson.

New Offices Built

Additions to the Realart scenario building have provided the title and reading department, consisting of Wells Hastings, Aubrey Stauffer and Milton Schwartz, with convenient offices in which to carry on their arduous duty of scratching through the chaff the mailman brings for that bright pearl of great price—a purchasable story.

Sada Cowan Returns

Sada Cowan, scenarist, is back from Korea, and ready to resume her professional work.

Film Knockers, Beware!

"America has no taste for uplift in drama. Our people nowadays don't want good plays."

William A. Brady, New York producer, made this comment today in announcing that the "Skin Game," by John Galsworthy, which opened here Monday night, will close Saturday. Last night's performence drew a little over $200 in receipts.

"The people prefer something in the farce line like 'Getting Gertie's Garter,' 'Ladies' Night,' or 'The Demi-Virgin,'" Brady continued. "Grim human documents have no chance competing with 'girly' shows and 'bedroom' farces. I am tempted to produce a few of such shows mystelf and then go in for the masterpieces. The drama in America is degenerating."

Flappers Overjoyed

Barrett C. Kiesling has been appointed head of the newly created publicity department at the Realart studio. Mr. Kiesling was for two years a member of the Lasky publicity department.

Finis Fix Finishes

Finis Fox, screen author, who recently turned producer, has cut and titled his first picture. "Man's Law and God's" is the title.

H. H. Van Loan Speeds

Life is just one melodrama after another for H. H. Van Loan. No sooner had he finished "A Siren of Seville," a Spanish thriller, than he started to work on another. "Thundering Silence" is the title.

Shades of Dumas!

"The Three Mugs of Beer" has been chosen as the working title of Lloyd Hamilton's current two-reel comedy which is a satire on "The Three Musketeers."

Rob Wagner Original

Rob Wagner, having been studying at close range the Realart people, has written an original story which will be an early vehicle for Constance Binney.

Universal's Night School

If you're an employee at Universal City and are ambitious, now's your chance! Irving S. Thalberg, manager, is planning to establish a night school, in which all employees may learn other branches of the motion picture industry than their own. Tentative arrangements have been made, and the first session will probably be held immediately after Thanksgiving. It is planned to pursue a definite course of study so that every step in the making of motion pictures is covered by instructors skilled in that particular subject. Carl Laemmle, president, has heartily indorsed the idea.

The course of study will naturally apply only to the mechanical technique of picture making, including photography, lighting, laboratory work and other correlated subjects.

Sullivan Original

Hobart Bosworth has just finished "White Hands," his first starring vehicle for Graf Productions. The story is by C. Gardner Sullivan.

Bradley King Collaborates

Bradley King, scenario writer, is engaged in placing "Finding Home," an original story by Gertrude Nelson Andrews, in continuity form for production.

Halperin Signed

Victor Hugo Halperin has been engaged by the Rogeill-Brown Productions to write a series of sixteen stories for "Bob" Reeves and Maryon Aye, who are co-starred in "Cactus Features."

Mr. Halperin was a former associate of Elbert Hubbard and has a large list of scenarios to his credit. The next story for Reeves and Miss Aye is titled "The Double Reward" and production will start on same the first of the week.

Irving Thalberg Original

Irving Thalberg has written an original story for Marie Prevost around the promising title of "The Frisky Flapper."

The Angel of Change

Harry Carr is now on the staff of Thomas H. Ince.

Edwin Justus Mayer has been transferred from Goldwyn's New York office to the Culver City studio to write sub-titles for photoplays.

Writes Barthelmess Story

Porter Emerson Browne, playwright, has just finished a story in which Richard Barthelmess will appear as his second starring vehicle under the management of Inspiration Pictures, Inc.

Hughes a Director

Rupert Hughes is now a director, as well as an author and playwright. He is directing his story, "Remembrance," for which he also wrote the continuity. His brilliant cast is composed of Claude Gillingwater, Kate Lester, Patsy Ruth Miller, Cullen Landis, Nell Craig, Dana Todd, Richard Tucker, Esther Ralston, Arthur Trimble and Lucile Ricksen.

Studies Celestial Stars

According to announcement in the October number of Popular Astronomer, Harvey Thew, scenario writer at the Realart studios in this city, has been elected a membr of the American Astronomical Association.

Realistic Stories Sought

The public cries for realism in screen stories. "Give us slices of life," say the picture fans.

"All right. We'll give them life," says Paul Bern, Goldwyn scenario editor. So Mr. Bern ordered his whole reading staff to spend one day going over newspapers from small towns in search of ideas which could be developed into photoplays.

"Small town papers are much closer to people and events than big metropolitan journals," said Mr. Bern, in explanation. "There is enough drama and comedy in every issue of a newspaper to make a good photoplay if the reader can only see it and develop it."

In any case it's an interesting experiment.

Ray Buys Original

Charles Ray has bought "Smudge," an original scenario by Rob Wagner.

Unique Art Titling

"Hail the Woman," Thomas H. Ince's forthcoming special, to be distributed by Associated First National, will embody what is declared to be the most artistic atmospheric sub-titles ever screened, as well as a unique prologue and epilogue. A special staff of camera men and artists, headed by Irving J. Martin, has been devoting its entire time during the past two weeks to working out new effects.

A number of the animated backgrounds for the titles are being photographed by Leo H. Braun of the Ince staff, a noted specialist in this type of work. Other innovations are being developed by John and Charles Stumar, in cooperation with Martin. The prologue to "Hail the Woman," symbolical of early Puritan intolerance, was filmed under the direction of Martin, while the epilogue, a masterpiece of atmospheric illusion, was directed by Thomas H. Ince.

Youth's Screen Lessons

Visualized lessons are soon to be given Los Angeles school children and students of the higher grades, according to Glenn Harper, secretary of the Motion-Picture Theater Owners of Southern California, who, yesterday announced that Dr. Francis Holley, of Washington, and Sidney S. Cohen, president of the Motion-Picture Theater Owners of America, are coming here to establish the educational innovation.

Dr. Holley is director of the Bureau of Commercial Economics at the national capital, and is acting in conjunction with the theater owners of the country in the plan to visualize school lessons. The plan was decided upon at the national convention of motion-picture theater owners when a public welfare division was formed.

"Thousands of theater owners throughout the country have volunteered the use of their houses for this new method of instruction," said Harper. "The plan is to be tried first in New York and Los Angeles, these cities being the principal centers of the film industry.

"It is our intention to effect a definite line of co-operation with school districts through which lessons taught in the classrooms may be visualized in the screens of neighborhood theaters by showing pictures covering the subjects of study, especially subjects having to do with vocational training.

"If the plan as regards the school districts works out as successfully as we believe it will it is our idea to visualize lessons for Sunday-school classes, but that is a matter that remains for the future to decide."

Germany's Rapid Strides

The London (Eng.) Times of recent date carried a letter written by Capt. L. H. Mander, an Englishman, who has been visiting in Germany, telling of the film industry in Germany. "There can be no question," wrote Captain Mander in part, "that the proposed American import duty on foreign films is directed primarily, and for the moment almost entirely, against Germany. The Germans take pride in openly admitting this. The 'movie' business in Germany before the war was almost a negligible quantity.

"In 1915, however, realizing that they had been cut off from the other picture-producing countries on account of the war, they set to work in truly German fashion, and today, although some of the world's markets are still closed to them, they stand indisputably second in the world in order of size, and, dare I say—merit.

"This achievement, amazing as it may sound, and in fact is, has been accomplished almost entirely by private enterprise. It is only scientific films that are occasionally subsidized by the government.

"The Germans are nothing if not financiers, and, by dint of amalgamations, reconstructions, forming of trusts and various other remedies, they successfully turned the corner and are today progressing at an alarming rate.

"There are about 1600 film companies in Germany, half that number being in Berlin. The four largest of these are the Ufa, the Decla, the May-Film and the Efa (European Film Alliance). The first three are entirely German concerns, the last is a company recently formed by the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation of America. They have taken over two large studios in Berlin, and are at present engaged on a production entitled "Pharaoh's Wife."

"The studios of the German companies, particularly those named above, are larger than anything we have elsewhere in Europe. Their offices resemble the Ritz hotel, and their outside sets, which are most elaborate and accurate in design and construction, sometimes cover dozens of acres.

"The technical detail of the German pictures I have seen has been, on the whole, more accurate than the average American 'feature' film, although the productions, taken as a whole, do not as yet attain that standard of perfection one associates with the American 'super' film."

Photoplays in Review

By the Staff

The Son of Wallingford

With no more sincerity or attempt at logic than a musical comedy, the plot of the Son of Wallingford dashes along through many extravagant settings and artificial subtitles. The real conflict between the would-be-straight son and his get-rich-quick father is so slight that an exaggerated antagonism is mechanically built up between Jimmy and Beegoode's son, whom Mary has promised to marry because Jimmy deceived her about his name. The schemes are so palpably arranged or so glossed over in speedy action and seething mob scenes, that the entire plot is an ingenious humbug. The average spectator is lost among the lightly sketched details of the high finance. Not taken seriously the picture amuses with its clever twists which manage to sustain the suspense, and its exciting rush from the fake to the genuine oil well and back again. The climax, with fire destroying the oil tanks, Wallingford about to be lynched, and the young people overcome on the lake of flaming oil, presents all the thrills of a lurid melodrama. The characters are of a simple human sort and are quite willing the spectators should see to the depths of their rather shallow natures; since they abound in good nature and optimism, they are not unpleasing to observe. Like the stories from which it is taken the picture gives an hour's entertainment, but leaves the spectator with an exaggerated picture of life and mighty little to think about.

Synopsis—Young Jimmy Wallingford and his foster brother, Toad, after a quarrel with Wallingford, Senior, over Jimmy's chip-of-the-old-block method of appropriating his father's new automobile, set out to make their fortunes. Upon driving by a pretty girl, Mary Curtis, they pause in a small town and continue to linger for a few days. This leads to the discovery of a possibility of oil on the Curtis farm, the formation of a company, and the boring for oil. Short on funds the boys return home to sell the car back to Dad. But he with Blackie Daw is away on some get-rich-quick scheme. Mrs. Wallingford and Mrs. Daw return with the boys only to find their husbands' scheme is to sell swamp lands in this same town. Foiled by the appearance of the wives and the boys, Wallingford and Daw are forced to buy the land themselves, but knowing the frailties of human nature they give the bill of sale and the first carbon to old man Beegoode while they keep the second carbon. Then they pretend to strike oil on the land by having oil from cars pumped into their tanks through old piping. Immediately the public would buy, and Beegoode, thinking he has the only copies of the bill of sale, falls into the trap and begins to sell off lots. Meanwhile Beegoode's son is winning Mary who thinks Jimmy deceived her. Two tramps who have stolen the third copy set fire to one of the oil tanks in a drunken fit. Jimmy rushes to save the oil, Mary jumps into a motorboat to save Jimmy, and Toad dives into the lake to save them both. To prevent the flames reaching the town the people open the sluice gates to let the water out regardless of the danger to the young people on the lake. Wallingford stops them only by saying there is no oil but that in the first tank. Learning of the fake the people demand Wallingford and Daw be hanged. The ropes are about to be adjusted when Mrs. Daw appears with the rescued third bill of sale and turns the people upon Beegoode for their money. Suddenly just after the boys and Mary are rescued, the Curtis well becomes a gusher, and all ends happily.

Wedding Bells

Accepting the impulsive characterization, you have in "Wedding Bells" an altogether delightful comedy drama, very light and frothy, but replete with amusing situations and considerable suspense. It skips along so lightly that not until after leaving the theater, and then it doesn't matter anyhow, does one ask why the bishop hadn't asked the question about the divorce. As a stage play, it was undoubtedly very entertaining as many of the subtitles that amuse are evidently lines from the play. As a photodrama, it is pleasant entertainment but soon forgotten.

Synopsis—Rosalie and Reginald, two very young and very impulsive people, fall in love and elope, but keep their marriage a secret from their friends and relatives. A slight tiff over Rosalie's hair, aided by her impulse to bob her hair and Reggie's untimely quarantine, ends in a separation and a divorce.

On reading in the paper of Reggie's approaching marriage to Marcia Hunter, the impulsive Rosalie rushes to Reggie's house for one last look and whatever else may happen. What happens is that he invites her to partake of the dinner he has had prepared for the groomsman, and seeing her luxuriant hair, now a wig, begs her to take it down. At this moment the best man appears and shortly afterward, because she fears he is ill, Marcia, her mother and her devoted Douglas. At first desirous of returning her ring, for which Reggie's hand is eagerly outstretched, Marcia in pique leaves, warning her fiance to be at the church in the morning. After many delays, including a visit from the fascinating Rosalie and another tiff with her, Reggie arrives at the church. As the ceremony is progressing, a messenger brings a note from Rosalie informing the bishop that Reggie is a divorced man. The bishop declines to proceed until Douglas offers to take the place of the groom, and rather than not be married at St. Martin's, Marcia and her mother consent. Reggie returns to Rosalie, and swears he will marry none other, even if she wore a wig (which she does).

Beating the Game

With an extremely well developed plot, made seemingly consistent with exceptional characterization, "Beating the Game" is a highly entertaining picture. There is considerable suspense, plenty of comedy in situations and titles, and an unusual twist at the end that keeps most of the

spectators wondering until the very last. Ben is hardly a worthy opponent and Lawson's temptations are reserved until the latter portion of the picture; hence the conflict is not particularly dramatic, even though it is sufficient to keep up the suspense. There is not a dull moment, and yet there is not a scene with which the most painstaking censor could find fault. No one could leave the theater without realizing again that "Honesty is the best policy."

Synopsis—"Fancy Charlie," while his pal, "Slipper Jones," waits below, breaks into the home of G. B. Lawson, and has raided the safe when he discovers in a cabinet a complete line of burglar tools. Rather than rob a fellow crook, he is returning the loot with a note when Lawson, who has been watching the whole proceeding, turns on the light. Lawson explains he has succeeded so well because everybody thought him honest and offers to stake Charlie to a thousand dollars with which to go to a small town, there to win the respect of the people in order to fleece them the more completely. Charlie agrees, and much to the surprise of Jones, leaves by the front door.

In Hickville, Ben Fanchette, after removing the money, manages to slip a stolen wallet into Charlie's pocket. When Charlie discovers it and hears that the wallet was stolen from Jules Fanchette, Ben's father, he puts the right amount of money in it, and returns it to Fanchette, thereby winning the title of an honest man. He is falling in love with Fanchette's bookkeeper, Nellie Brown, and at a picnic incurs the jealous wrath of Ben by his attentions to her. To please Nellie, help out Fanchette, and raise money for a Fresh Air Fund, Charlie takes an active hand in Fanchette's store. Soon he has made a name for himself and is talked of for mayor. One day Jones appears to inquire about his share in the thousand dollars. Mrs. Fanchette invites him to dinner to meet Charlie. A word or two with Ben shows him what sort he is, and his attitude toward Charlie. Carried away by the genuine honesty of the family, Jones refuses to take his share or to leave the town. Just then Lawson appears and tells Charlie to accept the nomination for mayor, as Lawson wishes to use his power as mayor for some of his schemes. On election day Charlie tells Nellie his love for her, but he has not made up his mind about the election. Lawson appears, and when Charlie threatens to tell the people who he really is, Lawson does it for him, only he tells them what a fine man Charlie is. Charlie says he must at least tell Nellie, but Lawson assures him he has already told her, and since he is not a crook but a criminologist who has been testing one of his notions with Charlie, everything ends happily.

The Affairs of Anatol

"The Affairs of Anatol" is made up of three distinct episodes in the lives of Anatol and Vivian. Each episode has its dramatic situations, its suspense, and its thrilling scenes, but none comes to a dramatic climax. There is a happy ending to the entire picture, but it is not truly a climax. This is due to there being no definite antagonist nor a simple conflict with a single objective. Consequently the picture was not particularly entertaining; it seemed to get nowhere, and after it ended one wondered what it was all about. The characterization, aided by a very able cast, lifted the picture out of the humdrum and prevented its becoming sensationally melodramatic. One knew from the subtitles the picture was intended to be a satire, but it was difficult to decide what was being satirized. Its chief entertainment value is in the acting, the clever subtitles, and the superb settings. Its psychology, however, is false, and it is in no wise a faithful transcription of Schnitzler.

Synopsis—Anatol and his wife, Vivian, are dining with a friend of Anatol's who is also an admirer of Vivian's, when, across the cafe with an old rounder, Anatol discovers a childhood sweetheart of his. He succeeds in persuading Emilie to leave the rounder, Bronson, but Vivian objects to his interest and asks the friend, Max, to take her home. In order to reform Emilie, Anatol provides her with an apartment and much cultural influence, and finally even persuades her, so he thinks, to throw the jewels Bronson had given her into the river. When she demands that he divorce his wife, however, he leaves in anger. At home he finds Max and Vivian very busy over a game of chess. Going the next night to explain matters to Emilie, he finds her with Bronson and a number of her old friends enjoying a very gay party. In anger he orders the people out, proceeds to smash up the furniture, and return Emilie and the pieces to Bronson. Thoroughly disillusioned he returns to his wife. Vivian meantime had amused herself with social functions, the climactic affair being a tea for a famous hypnotist. Nazzer Singh hypnotizes Vivian, but her husband prevents the matter from going too far. They decide to go into the country where all is sincerity and peace.

In a country village Annie Elliot steals the church's money, which is in her husband's keeping, to buy some finery. When her husband cannot be pacified and turns her out, she throws herself into the river. Anatol and Vivian are just floating under the bridge and succeed in rescuing Annie. While Vivian is gone for a doctor, Anatol revives Annie and is holding her in his arms when his wife returns. Meanwhile Annie has accidentally felt his wallet and slipped it into her pocket. In disgust Vivian goes back to the car and drives to the city alone. Annie takes the money to her husband, telling him an old man gave it to her. Anatol walks home and when his wife refuses to listen to him, decides to go out and make a night of it. Vivian comes to the same decision and calls upon Max to take her.

After the theater, Anatol meets the notorious Satan Synne. At first she scorns his advances, but after receiving a telegram stating she must have three thousand dollars for the operation on her husband, she beckons Anatol and takes him to her apartment. There she has nearly persuaded him to give her the check when a phone message says her husband is not so well; she faints, and Anatol taking the receiver gets the rest of the message. He leaves the check and returns home once more disillusioned. Vivian returns about nine the next morning after a rather stupid party with Max; she refuses any explanation to Anatol. Just then Nazzar Singh comes in to say good-bye. Anatol persuades him to hypnotize Vivian so that she will tell him the truth. Max begs him not to ask the question. After a struggle, Anatol awakens Vivian with a kiss. Max slips away and Anatol returns the wedding ring to Vivian's finger which she had given him back when he demanded an explanation.

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Concerning the Writing of Photoplays

Q.—About how many pages should a detailed synopsis contain?

A.—No satisfactory rule can be given in this matter. A story prepared in detailed synopsis form should not contain unnecessary description, dialogue or extraneous matter, yet everything that has an important bearing on the story should be included. Sometimes a story may be told in eight or ten pages while in other cases fifty or sixty pages are necessary. It is preferable that a detailed synopsis be a little too long rather than too short for in attempting to be brief some important incident may be left out and the story weakened thereby.

Q.—What is the present market for the two-reel drama and what type of play will be open for this market in the future?

A.—For a long time there was no demand for two-reel dramas but recently a number of such productions have been made and apparently the two-reel length is gaining popularity. At present there is considerable demand for two-reel western stories and a small demand for two-reel dramas dealing with many phases of modern American life. The five-reel demand is so much greater, however, that from a practical selling standpoint it is better to develop the longer form of screen drama.

Q.—One hears so much about the special requirements for a good reincarnation story. Will you please tell me what they are?

A.—The difficulty in writing stories dealing with reincarnation lies in the fact that there are many people in every audience who know little or nothing of this subject and as a result the plot of such a story must be so carefully explained and so clearly presented that everyone will thoroughly understand it. Unless one has an unusually novel and dramatic story that will be perfectly clear to every member of the audience it is better to avoid this difficult subject.

Q.—In spite of the Volsted act we know there is considerable drinking of intoxicating liquor being done. To what extent may drinking and moonshining be shown upon the screen?

A.—You are quite right in stating that there is much drinking in spite of legislation prohibiting it. Nevertheless it is assumed our country is dry and for this reason producers are avoiding drinking scenes and for this reason it is just as well to discard them in the stories unless they are indispensable.

Q.—What is the market for photodrama built on Bible stories?

A.—Many excellent screen dramas are modernized paraphrases of Bible stories. The Bible is a never ending source of dramatic material. Stories dealing with Bible times are not much in demand, however. Several companies have been organized to produce Bible dramas but they do not seem to have been highly successful.

Q.—To what extent may actual happenings be used in photodramas?

A.—There is no limit to the use of actual happenings provided they are interesting, dramatic, and convincing. Some actual happenings are of so unusual a nature that audiences will not believe them when they see them on the screen. It is a fact that truth is stranger than fiction in many instances and frequently real instances must be tempered and re-written in order that they will convince the audience of their reality.

Q.—Will you tell me just what producers mean by "timely themes?"

A.—It would seem that this phrase is self-explanatory. A timely theme is one dealing with a subject of general current interest. During the world war, the war was a timely theme. Any broad subject being generally discussed is timely until it is dealt with to such an extent that it becomes boresome.

Q.—I have an excellent sense of humor but cannot construct a lengthy plot. Do you think I should write two-reel comedies?

A.—There is a demand for two-reel comedies although the five and six-reel is so much greater that you would do well to exert every effort toward building a more lengthy form of screen plot. If you are capable of writing two-reel stories you should be able to handle five-reel subjects if you really try to do so.

Q.—What hope has an unknown writer of photoplays in competition with Elinor Glynn, Rex Beach, etc.

A.—In the frantic search for new screen material the producers are more and more judging the story on its merits and paying no attention to the name of the author. The Goldwyn company has for many months insisted upon stories from eminent authors. Recently they have changed their policy and have declared that they will welcome stories from anyone regardless of name or fame provided real photodramatic merit exists.

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In the three years of its existence the Palmer Corporation has trained many scenario writers and sold many of their photoplays. You have sat spellbound in your theatre and witnessed the work of Palmer students which was written in farm houses, city flats, and mining camps.

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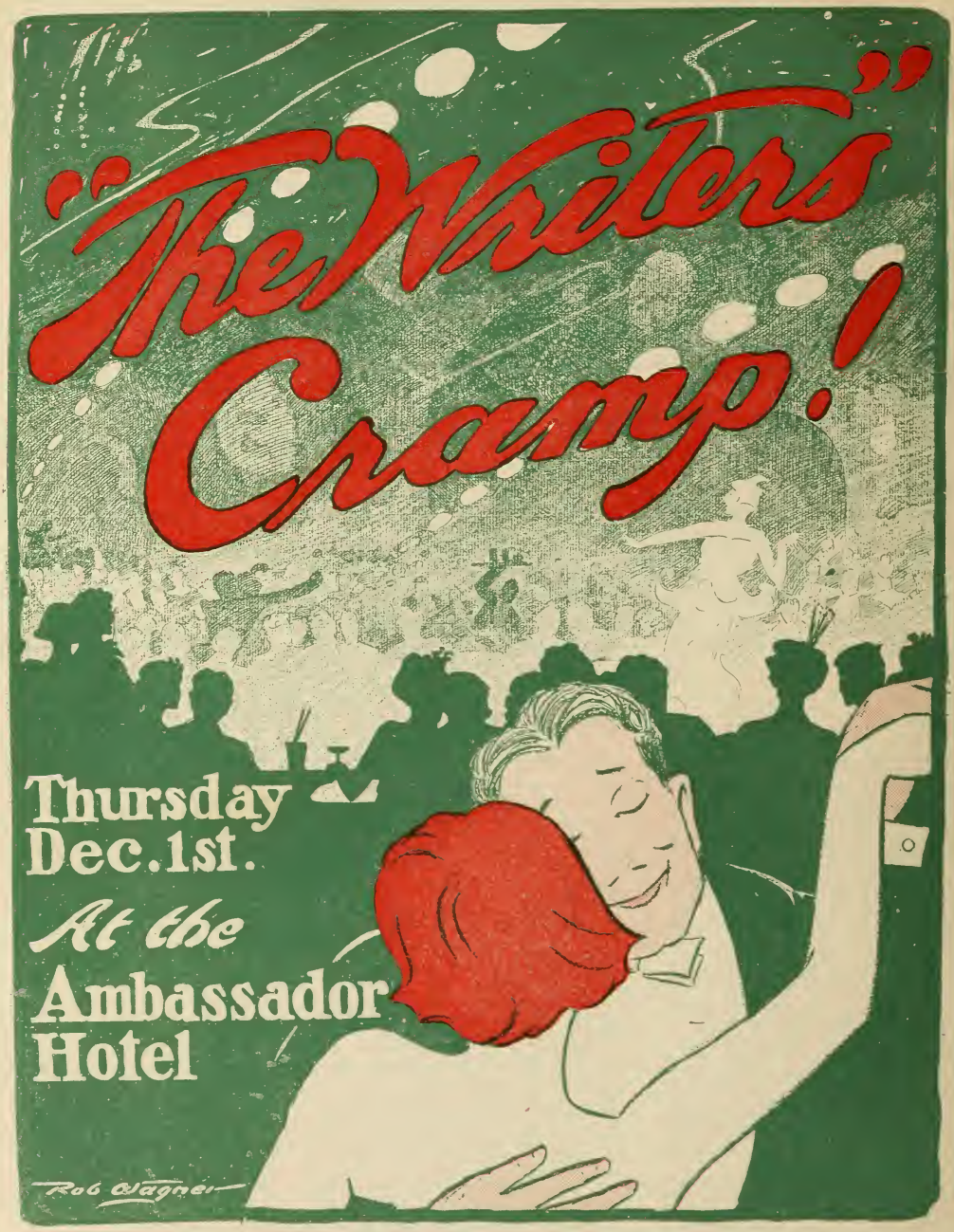
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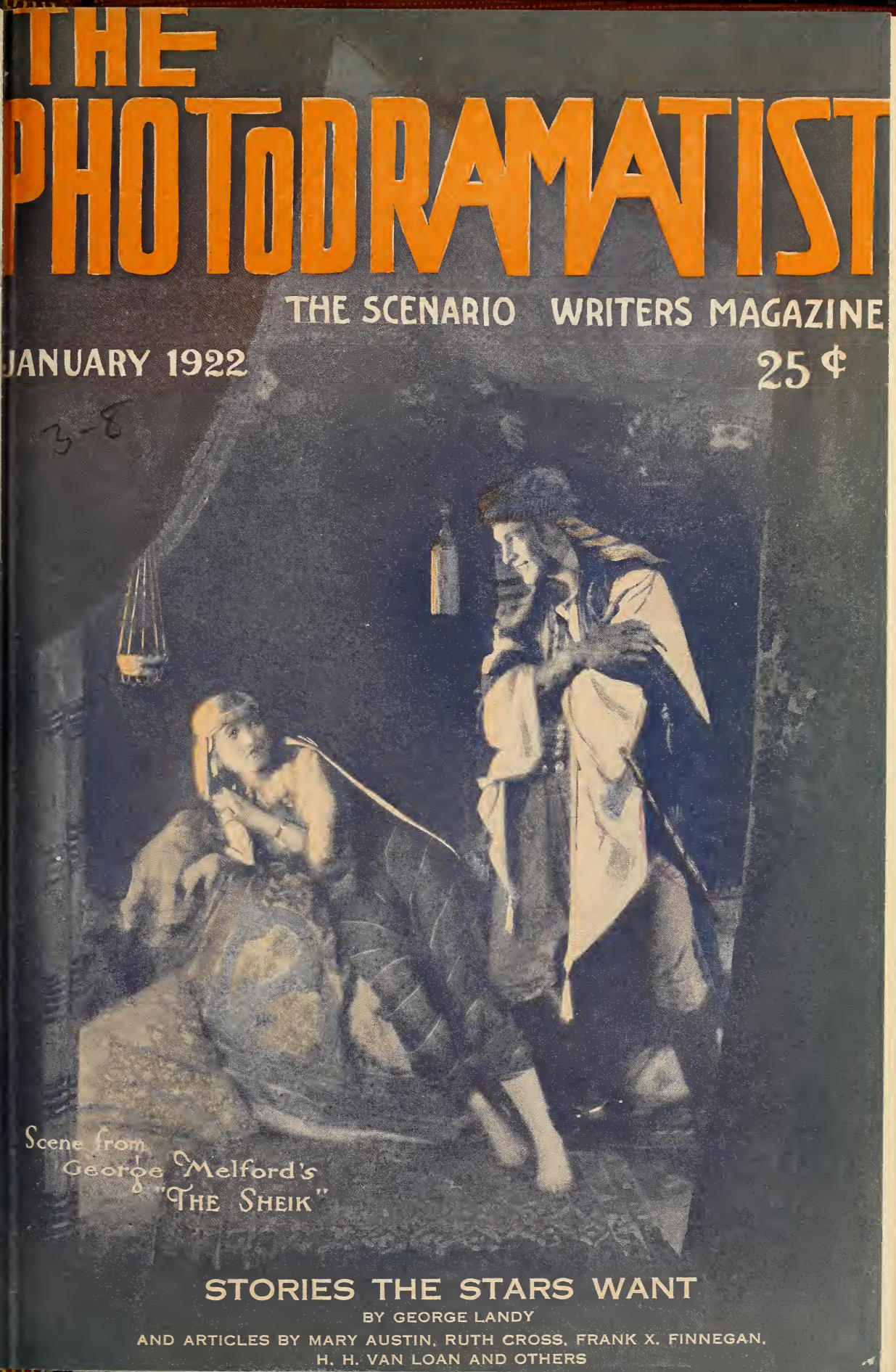
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THE PHOTODRAMATIST

THE SCENARIO WRITERS MAGAZINE

JANUARY 1922

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Scene from George Melford's "The Sheik"

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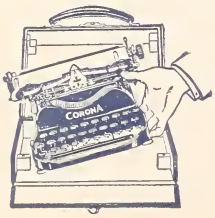
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The PHOTODRAMATIST



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THE FEBRUARY NUMBER

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The PHOTODRAMATIST

Stories the Stars Want

By George Landy

THE function of The Photodramatist is to serve its readers along technical and informative lines. To write in the flowery vein of the fictionist or the romanticist would be carrying coals to Newcastle. Hence, in this symposium as in an earlier Producers' Symposium which I collated for The Photodramatist and which appeared in the issue for September, I have confined myself to a reportorial style and so I merely present for your guidance the statements of a number of prominent screen players as they were made to me.

It would be inaccurate to say that the film actor—even the star—can dictate the selection of his stories, except in those rare instances where the star's own company is the producing organization. In all cases, however, the expressed, or even the understood, preference of the leading players is a potent factor in the determination of what their vehicles shall be. It is also axiomatic that the actor can rise to his utmost performance only on the wings of the sort of story which he has idealized and which he prefers above all others. Sometimes he has this story clearly in mind; more often, however, he expresses it by illustration from a part he has played previously, from a book or a story which he has read, from a play or a picture which he has seen—or from a combination of these, which he has interlarded with the weavings of his own imagery.

Manifestly, it was impossible for the collator of this symposium to interview all, or even a great number of the stars or the leading figures in the ranks of the screen's players. I have, therefore, selected a group of fourteen, seven men and seven women, who are thoroughly representative of the best and the most hopeful in the film world. And with the present inclination toward the all-star, or no-star system of casting, I have included a few leads and character players, for in a sphere where movement is as rapid as in motion pictures, due to changes in public sentiment and other considerations, as well as the rapid promotion which is to be won by real ability, the leading player or the character actor of today may be the star or the featured player of tomorrow.

To students of the photodrama it is superfluous to draw the obvious conclusions that summarize the sentiments of the players quoted below. Pre-eminent, however, is the cry for stories of simplicity, directness and sympathy and for roles demanding real characterization rather than mere "walking-across-the-set."

Gloria Swanson

Thumbs down on the actress; not the professional stage or screen player, necessarily, but the woman—usually of the society type—who acts all the time in real life. That is the type I have least use for and I believe the public is also fed up with her. Usually she is a fashion plate, according to her economic possibilities, for the leader of her set on Main Street can be as extravagant as is the Fifth Avenue matron.

Let us have more stories where the heroine is the true woman who does so much to build up the family and the state.

Raymond Hatton

The good actor is a creative artist; the best role is the newest. I presume that there are only a certain number of fundamental parts for the actor to play, just as

there are said to be only seven primary jokes and all the others are variations from them. Therefore, the photodramatist who can offer me a delineation that presents a new combination of characteristics is bestowing the greatest blessing upon me and I shall arise and sing his praises in the public places.

Personally, I like most the role that is frankly allegorical or that suggests allegory. To me "The Wanderer" in the play of that name is the most remarkable figure in fiction and if I could ever play a role in a picture that was modelled after it, even to a slight extent, I would feel that I had not lived in vain.

Colleen Moore

The Charles Ray type has become a distinct personage in the field of the photodrama, thanks to the splendid series of impersonations created by this sterling artist; the parts I want to play might well be classed as female Charles Ray types. These are the roles I want to play most—yet, surely the Irish bull will be allowed to one with so Celtic a name as mine—I'd even more like to portray a girl like Lorna Doone. Sturdy of mind and body, fearless, and yet feminine to the core—these are the characteristics of my ideal role.

James Woods Morrison

All the world loves a lover—but only if he is young—and even if he is not a lover, provided his youth is his outstanding attribute, all the world likes him. I confess to being a conformist, in this respect at least, for I prefer seeing young men on the screen and I would rather play them than any others. The youth of sixteen or seventeen, with all his complexes, is the most interesting to me and the kind of role I want to create. Taking him in all the interesting intricacies of his adolescence and portraying his attainment of young manhood: there is my ideal part.

There is an old adage of the stage to the effect that no actress can properly portray Juliet until she is old enough to be Juliet's grandmother; fortunately it does not apply to the screen. The adolescent hero, portrayed sympathetically and in all seriousness, is rare in our screen stories. Perhaps that is partly due to the really great difficulty of "writing" him, but that photodramatist who will perform this function for the films will have written his name in the screen's Hall of Fame.

Bebe Daniels

There is a universal sympathy for the pleasant, little, harum-scarum, especially when it's a she—and that's the type of role I want to keep right on playing. There is a spirit of adventure and fun in the picturization of stories with such heroines that makes all the actors do their best since they are having a great time of it. Naturally, this results in the characterizations being very convincing and it is all the more probable, therefore, that the public will get more pleasure out of the picture. Let us help keep folks' minds off their troubles and petty worries. I feel that the mischievous, yet fundamentally wholesome, heroine is the type of part for me.

Raymond McKee

A re-creation of the usual is what I strive for in my work. The dramatic strength of the simple and homey is only now beginning to be appreciated by the screen producers, and motion pictures will soon be better for it. I want a photodramatist to give a role of a normal, human youth whose life is set in a background of normal, human people. I have no interest in the melodramatic nor in the farce. But I do want roles of deep appeal growing from pathos and the loving interest that comes from humor.

Priscilla Dean

Let me send up a cry in the wilderness for further relief from the crooks I seemed doomed to play until very recently. The crook exists in the world of actualities and therefore has his, or her, place on the screen; even more, the romance of villainy —especially when it "goes straight" in the final reel—has an appeal of its own. But there are lots of real people who are not crooks—and they have a lot of romance and drama in their lives as well.

Romance and drama—they are the two essentials of the photodrama, as I see it—they certainly are what I want in my stories. I incline to the big story, because I know there is added entertainment value in the plot that requires elaborate production; and I confess, too, to a personal preference for acting in such pictures. But they need not necessarily be laid in the Orient, in Europe or anywhere else outside of our own country. Surely there is enough big, romantic drama of the finest type conceivable in the story of our own land and in the myriad happenings that fill the lives of the hundred million. A melting pot is always interesting and full of action and color.

Theodore Roberts

The piquant slice of life is the most interesting to me as an actor; the role I want most to create on the screen is the elderly, garrulous codger who feels that he has seen

all and known all—not vaingloriously, but in the whimsical manner of the old salt portrayed by W. W. Jacobs. "Lightnin'," the titular figure of Frank Bacon's stage perennial, is another example of this type. The quaint romance of fifty—there is the role for me.

Kathryn McGuire

The normal girl in her late teens—not the flapper, not the society girl, not the-villain-still-pursued-her type, not the rube nor the super-sophisticated city dweller, not the bespectacled highbrow nor the comic-supplement halfwit—the girl you would like to have for your sister or your daughter: she is my ideal, both as an actress and also as a member of the audience. And I am sure that most of us, in the latter class, want to see her as often as we can. Independent and possessed of backbone, ready to do her share at all times in the drama of life; at the same time tender and lovable.

Cullen Landis

"Each man in his life plays many parts" certainly applies to the screen actor even more than to his stage colleague, so that even my own experience includes a wide range of characterizations. Most of all I enjoyed creating the role of the Curly Kid in "The Girl Outside," a youthful adventurer with just enough pathos and depth of character to make him convincing, his predominating elements being a boyish deviltry and a native shrewdness, leavened by the birth within him of a chivalry he had never suspected himself of owning.

I realize that perhaps the chief evil of the screen has been the servile imitation of producers and photodramatists in copying blindly preceding pictures that have won popular success; but I specify this particular part because it embodies, far better than I could describe in a volume, the characteristics of the young men I want to portray on the silver sheet.

Madge Bellamy

The return to popularity of the story of simple people is not only a wholesome sign, but a belated recognition by producers of the fact that these stories are still the most interesting to most audiences. Years ago, our stage was devoted to such stories and so were our earlier pictures. When plays became more complex in their psychological study, pictures followed suit—as they have done for so long—but we have now learned that the tale of ordinary folk is the best story on which to bank for popularity. At any rate, that's the kind of story I want.

Harry Carey

Nothing can approach the wholesome, romantic appeal of the outdoor photodrama; above all other forms of entertainment, pictures of this nature are the most patent relief from the society drivel which has over-crowded the screen for so long a time. The chief fault with most of the Western stories which we have had to play, as film actors, is that writers have looked only to the past, to the days of the "forty-niners" and their kin, for their romance. There is plenty of it in the West today, and it has the added interest of contemporaneousness.

When I can play in pictures of this type —Westerns of today—I know I am doing what I like best, what I can do best.

Agnes Ayres

Recent vehicles notwithstanding, my favorite role is the sweet girl of the so-called middle classes, be she rural or urban. O. Henry has portrayed her, to my mind at least, better than any other American writer of my knowledge and that is why I look back so fondly to the picturizations of this master's stories in which I played some time ago. Not the society butterfly—although she has her dramatic problems that compel the interest of the actress and the audience in turn—but the girl of the great majority. She is most interesting to me and I believe she is most interesting to the theatre-goer. We can understand her best, and understanding is the mother of sympathy.

Wallace Reid

The possibilities of the hero in the so-called costume play have always interested me, for I believe firmly in the added attractiveness of stories of this type, provided always that the plot is never subordinated to the costumes. The success of recent pictures of this type has borne out my long-standing theory. It is not, however, necessary for the costume picture to be based on some well known story or play. I know that our photodramatists can conceive their own plots laid in such surroundings and in such locales and times. To get the lead in such a costume picture is my highest hope.



TOO many screen authors forget technique—too soon.

The Passing of the Squanderlust

By Frank X. Finnegan

IN these parlours days the hopeful writer of stories for the screen would do well to keep ever in mind another important character beside the stalwart hero and the magnetic heroine. That is the argus-eyed auditor, who counts the cost of production.

The making of motion pictures has definitely entered upon a new era. The day of the squanderlust—of reckless prodigality of expenditure by producers—has passed and in all of the important studios economy and efficiency have taken its place. This does not mean "cheap" pictures, from the viewpoint of the public. But it does mean the elimination of wastage in every branch of production—the application of strict business principles, while the high standard of the output is maintained.

True, there will be elaborate "super-specials" produced from time to time that will necessitate the outlay of a fortune in the hope that it will pour back, doubled or trebled, into the coffers of producing companies. Occasional pictures like "The Three Musketeers," "The Queen of Sheba" and "Foolish Wives," for example, will be made at a vast expenditure of time and money.

But these will be the exceptions. They do not greatly interest the photodramatist from a personal or professional point of view. The outlook is that the backbone of the motion picture industry will be the average picture, produced at a minimum outlay consistent with present-day standards so that it may be released to the greatest number of exhibitors at a rental they will be able to pay.

And how does this production problem interest the screen writer? In that the story is the basis of production and too many writers, casting about for unique backgrounds, untrodden paths, something that "hasn't been done," go so far afield that their stories, otherwise acceptable, are killed at the outset by the looming costs of production.

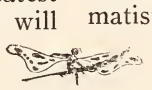
"Good possibilities but too expensive" is the mental notation of production managers on many manuscripts that are returned to bewildered writers without that explanation. The explosion of an ocean liner's boilers makes a spectacular scene—but liners are expensive. It is costly and arduous work to use submarines, aeroplanes and battleships in actual scenes with members of the cast in action.

Hundreds of troops in camp and in battle array make picturesque shots and hundreds of rioters storming a mill may stir the blood of the spectator — but hundreds of "extras" cost thousands of dollars a day. Besides, it has is almost impossible to give the public a thrill it has not had through the screen—to film a massive spectacular effect with even a glimmer of novelty.

After all, life lies all about us, equally as dramatic and as picturesque as that the "snow country" and tropical island background may hold—and not nearly so expensive to reproduce. Everything has "been done" since writers first put pen to paper. It is the function of the photodramatist of today to do it in a new way.

"What the Studios Want"

is pointed out by Frank X. Finnegan, for the last three years a member of the Famous Players-Lasky editorial staff. No potential photodramatist can afford to forego a careful reading of this sound article. Incidentally, many will recall Mr. Finnegan's colorful short stories in leading magazines of a few years ago. He also established quite a reputation as a critic during the several years he was dramatic editor of both Hearst newspapers in Chicago.



SOME screen writers are original; others are well read—and naive.

The Guild Forum

A monthly department devoted to the interests of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America, the official organization of recognized photodramatists and studio staff writers.

By Alfred Hustwick

The Screen Writers' Guild

OFFICERS

Frank E. Woods, President.
June Mathis, Vice-President.
Eugene Presbrey, Treasurer and Executive Secretary.
Dwight Cleveland, Recording Secretary.

Executive Committee

The officers and Thompson Buchanan, Elmer Harris, A. S. LeVino, Jeanie MacPherson, Frederick Palmer, Elmer Rice, Rob Wagner.

About Criticisms

Twenty years ago, when the editor of this department was a college boy with serious literary aspirations, and a regular contributor to certain cheap English publications, he sat himself down to the task of writing "A Critical Survey of Contemporary Fiction." In the seriousness of youth he felt that it was his duty to appraise the fiction of the day in a well-worded critique for the benefit and guidance of a bewildered and betrayed public. He was convinced that something was putrescent in the literary Denmark and he spared no pains, and no pity, in lifting the lid.

It was the editor of a weekly publication which catered to a mass, rather than a class, taste in reading matter, which printed this very critical survey over the author's name. And the editor printed it simply and solely because he felt that it was immature enough in its arguments and conclusions to awaken interest in the minds of many readers who were similarly immature. He took the liberty of prejudicing the reader by an introduction of his own which ran as follows:

"Wholesale condemnation is always to be deplored. It suggests a want of perspective and a lack of discrimination towards the arts which is in keeping with a crime. But, doubtless, from many readers who see no reason for pessimism in the present quality of English fiction, replies to this article will be forthcoming."

Of course the editor was *not* interested in the amateurish efforts of his readers to index contemporary fiction for posterity. What he *was* interested in was circulation, the kind that sticks, the kind that comes from starting a mess of arguments and making your periodical the clearinghouse for them. This was—or used to be—considered good business.

A Long Totter

This personal reminiscence has no place in these columns except as an introduction to, and possibly an explanation of, something of general interest, that something being the periodic attacks on the motion picture art through the columns of The Bookman. On two occasions since this publication arrayed itself in a blue shirt and black bow tie, with a monocle for use whenever needed, it has opened its columns to contributors who have made "critical surveys" of the motion picture art which have equalled in the vigor of their condemnation and the value of their conclusions the schoolboy article referred to at the top of this page. A few years ago the public eye, chancing upon the occasional bookstand copy of this eminently respectable magazine, was held by the ominous warning, displayed on the front cover,

"The MOVIES, A Colossus That Totters."

And a few weeks ago, in the same place on the cover, the patient public, still anxiously waiting for the Colossus to quit tottering and be done with it, was again agitated by the announcement that Mr. Burton Rascoe had contributed an article to that number entitled,

"The Motion Pictures; An Industry, Not An Art."

Those who dashed madly up to the counter and paid ten cents too much for that particular issue of The Bookman learned from the irascible Rascoe that the Colossus had indeed quit tottering, in fact, to quote his article, "The movie industry in America . . . . within a few years . . . . has become one of the five most important industries in the country."

This was rather sad news for those who

lived daily in expectations of seeing old Colossus fall and break his nose. It must have been an irritating confession for this literary bluebook to make.

Tabasco au Rascoe

Mr. Rascoe's tirade, to be fair, is not directed solely against the "movies." His greater concern seems to be with the mental, moral and intellectual decay of the American people, as *he* sees it. That this sad condition is due to other causes than the movies he readily admits, in fact, after reading his article most carefully, it is hard for one to decide whether he lays most blame upon the producers, or the public, for the alleged absence of art from the "movies."

Mr. Rascoe's critical method is so strongly reminiscent of that employed in the preparation of the "critical survey of contemporary fiction "of twenty years ago that the present writer may be pardoned for a brief analysis.

First of all, our critic decides that the intelligence of the average adult male in the United States is as that of a normal fourteen-year-old child, and quotes as his authority the data compiled by the National Research Council from the examinations of conscripts in the recent world war. Then he proceeds to postulate that this premise must be so because his examination of the motion pictures proves it. Wonderful reasoning, is it not?

And then Mr. Rascoe makes it clear that there is little hope for the "fourteen-year-old mind" to get any better so long as the "movies" are what they are; and no hope of the "movies" getting any better so long as the "fourteen-year-old mind" refuses to grow up.

Once inside of this vicious circle the poor critic is doomed. He flounders about hopelessly, "cusses" the "movies" abominably, and finally sinks to earth exhausted, muttering something, probably a slogan of his clan, about "prejudices, taboos, neuroses and superstitions."

Sir Gilbert Smites

This is not the place or the time to make an extended reply to Mr. Rasoce's allegations which have already been subjected to searching examination and adequately controverted by the editor of "The Photodramatist." The Bookman submitted the advance proofs to the Rt. Hon. Sir Gilbert Parker, Honorary Vice-President of the Guild, and the good Sir Gilbert proceeded in a most workmanlike manner to demolish Mr. Rascoe's frail edifice of assumptions in the December issue. If any member has missed either of these articles he will find copies of The Bookman containing them in the club library.

That the reply to this childish attempt to deny the existence of the motion picture art, an art that makes itself daily more apparent to all fair-minded critics of the films, should come from a member of this Guild is a matter for congratulation. That it should come from a novelist of Sir Gilbert's standing is even more important. It suggests to the writer that the Guild, with its large membership of artists in the drama, literature, and other mediums of creative expression, is more than able to protect "our infant art" against misleading and malicious "criticism" of the Rascoe brand.

Perhaps Mr. Rascoe understands, by now, that "wholesale condemnation" is not only to be "deplored"; by the professional critic it is to be avoided, if he is to save himself from ridicule.

History in the Making

Years from now, when the Guild and "The Writers" are hoary with age, some historian will delve into the past for facts and figures concerning their infancy and adolescence. What he will discover will undoubtedly astonish him. For instance:

Less than a year after the Guild was organized it possessed a splendid club-house. Seventeen months after its birth it successfully launched a unique club made up of men and women who write photodramas and numbering among its active and associate members some of the foremost artists of the stage, screen, drama, and literature.

Immediately after it opened its club the Guild staged the biggest and most brilliant social function ever held in the West, and thereby won the good will of society, the press, and the club world. Incidentally, it managed this affair so well that it found itself with a neat profit of around $6500.00 in its hands wherewith to equip an athletic field.

All this will be subject matter for the historian. Meanwhile Marion Fairfax and her most efficient committee, who "put over" the first annual edition of "The Writers' Cramp," deserve the very warmest thanks of all members for their indefatigable efforts. The athletic field, soon to be started, will be a lasting monument to the first "Cramp" and the loyal workers who carried it to success.

Our Contemporary

The editor of this department is glad to welcome a new paper called "The Script"

which has been issued for three weeks by Jack Cunningham for the Screen Writers' Guild and their club, called "The Writers." It is a bright, breezy little sheet, and full of news about the men and women who write the films, and also tells about what the club itself is doing.

Mr. Cunningham is a bright young man and shows promise of becoming quite a first-class editor with a little more experience. His enterprise in starting this self-supporting paper for the club is to be commended, and great praise is also due to Rex Taylor, who gets the advertisements, of which there are enough to pay the printer, which is the main thing. Correspondents have been appointed in the various towns where there are moving picture studios so that the news of what screen writers are doing will be well covered.

The whole force employed in getting out the new paper is to be complimented upon the first three issues.

So far as we are informed Mr. Cunningham is the only editor who makes his living by writing moving picture scripts, and also the only scenario writer who produces a script every week.

Split Reels

A correspondent of The Photodramatist, referring to a recent article in these columns dealing with the script registration bureau conducted by the Guild, corrects the statement made therein to the effect that it is impossible to copyright motion picture scripts. He forwards a copy of the California Assembly Bill, No. 133, which has been in force since March 31st of this year, and which provides for the registration of motion picture scenarios, etc., for which registration a fee of five dollars is charged by the secretary of state. A copy of this bill was published, by the way, in the May issue of The Photodramatist.

The statement made in this department referred only to national copyright. As regards the service offered by the Guild the same protection is given to the registrant as that provided by the state, and the fee is much smaller, fifty cents for Guild members, one dollar for non-members.

At a recent meeting of the Board of Governors of "The Writers" the dues for non-resident members was fixed at $25.00 a year.

Membership cards were authorized by the board and are now being printed. These cards can be had upon application to Mr. Eugene Presbrey, the executive secretary.

Guests' cards are now ready and will be issued to guests on the application of members in good standing. Not more than two guest cards will be issued to any one member in the same month, and only one card will be issued for any one guest in each year.

REGARDING MEMBERSHIP IN THE SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD

"I have sold two photoplays and have submitted others to producers. Does this entitle me to membership in the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League? Is the Guild a purely local organization maintained for the benefit of professional writers who live in Los Angeles or is it open to any writer for the screen?"

The above enquiry is a quotation from one of many letters received from readers of this department of The Photodramatist during the past four months, and since most of these correspondents seem very much at sea in their idea of the Guild's scope and purpose and the qualifications required for membership it has been thought advisable to make a brief statement of what the Screen Writers' Guild stands for, who is eligible to membership and how application for membership may be made by candidates living outside of Los Angeles.

What the Guild Stands For

The Screen Writers' Guild is an association of men and women who write for the screen and is allied to the Authors' League of America. Membership in the Guild includes membership in the Authors' League, and also in the club maintained by the Guild in Hollywood, Calif., known as "The Writers."

A question frequently asked is, "What are the aims and objects of the Guild?" To answer this in full would take more space than is here available but the purposes of the organization may be concisely stated as follows:

To co-operate with all authors and creative artists throughout the world in securing adequate copyright laws to protect literary, dramatic and other compositions, this co-operation being made possible through the Authors' League and its Guilds and affiliations. To combat censorship of motion pictures; to protect the rights of its members and to secure for them adequate screen credit and publicity; to work for the elevation of the motion picture art.

Who May Join

Any person, irrespective of sex, who derives an income from writing for the screen,

or who has written an original story or continuity which has been produced in motion pictures, is eligible to active membership in the Guild and Club.

What It Costs

Resident members of the Guild (that is, those who reside within fifty miles of the Guild office in Hollywood) pay dues of $60.00 per year, which includes their dues in the Authors' League and entitles them to all privileges of the club.

Non-resident members, residing more than fifty miles from the club-house, pay $25.00 per year.

In addition to active members of the Guild who are, as stated, members of the Club by virtue of their membership in the Guild, there are associate members of the club alone, these associates being admitted from the ranks of those who are engaged in creative work other than writing for the screen, from sympathetic laymen who are patrons or connoisseurs of the arts.

How to Join

If the applicant for active membership lives within fifty miles of the club house his name must be proposed and seconded by two active members in good standing. After scrutiny by the membership committee, the application will then be passed up to the executive committee and the board of governors of the club for action. If the application is voted upon favorably an invitation is extended to the applicant to become a member.

In the case of non-residents, application should be mailed direct to the executive secretary of the Guild with such accompanying information and references as the applicant can furnish to the executive and membership committees regarding his, or her, qualifications. The secretary will acknowledge receipt of the application and advise the applicant regarding the decision of the executive committee.

For all information write to

Mr. Eugene Presbrey,
Executive Secretary,
The Screen Writers' Guild,
6716 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, Calif.



The Movie Director's Lament

By Vara M. Jones

Like a cast-off film shelved in the morgue,
Or one some pesky censor board has banned—
Without hope of re-issue or re-take—
That's me! I'm canned!!
For I got a close-up at a little star
Who vamped me on the spot, and for a while
The action was sure brisk; and, oh,
The props I sent that girl would make you smile.
And I got to visualizing a big scene
On some location where no mob would be,
Just Cupid to shoot the business when I asked
Her to feature in a film for me.

I meant to make it class; tell her she
Could shine. I'd never want to star. Not much!
And I surely thought the reel would end
With a kiss and a clutch.
But a he-vamp came along and crabbed the scene;
He registered cash; that meant the gate for me!
I was like an extra—camera pest—
Something that cluttered up the scenery.
And now she's left my lot for good;
Her new contract is for life; oh, gee.
All I've got's a flash-back of my dream;
It's "Iris out, kid; Iris out!" for me!



A STORY may just as well end happily as unhappily, and the group who hold out for the unhappy ending are nonsense-makers. Life is never an ending, but always a continuation. We may complete a story at a high or low tide.

The Eminent Author and the Screen

By Mary Austin

READING the Photodramatist for October, I was struck with the number of times it insisted, in one form or another, that photoplays by "eminent authors" were sure to be failures, failures being largely measured in terms of the box office. This, if true, can mean but one of two things: Either screen writing is an art of such distinct and unfamiliar quality that its type genius has not yet appeared, or it is not an art at all in the sense that the term is applicable to music, literature, painting and sculpture. If it is true that high success in the written story unfits one for success in the photo-story, this is the most damaging admission that has ever been made about it. It is also the most important, for it must finally determine the public attitude toward the whole business of "the movies" in the matter of censorship, social consideration and awards of merit.

What determines the artistic success of painting, music, literature, is the relation of high quality technique in the handling of the medium, to the truth to be expressed. Since in any given period the number of people able to entertain profound truth about life in any *new* form, is small, it follows that one of the tests of the highest art is the ability to hold out for a considerable period of time. Great literature does not necessarily fail of immediate appreciation, but it must also show lasting qualities. Other things being equal, the rank of a literary artist is determined by the rate at which he secures his audience, a hundred thousand for the first year and then silence, a thousand a year for a hundred years, or a hundred a year for a thousand years. What, for instance, is the New York run of "Lightnin'," compared to the popularity of "Edipus the King," which still claims appreciative audiences after nearly three thousand years?

The screen writer may complain that the other two thousand and twenty-five years mean nothing to him, but, whether we like it or not, arts are finally estimated by their value to society, rather than their value to the artist. When we speak of a successful screen play we mean one that possesses a power to please on presentation, or at most within a few days. A "big success" is a matter of a few months or a year or two at most, and in this short time contest, it appears that the "eminent authors" do not hold their own. They are found to be "over the heads of Pa and Ma Tucker and Lizzie the Ribbon Clerk," but does that necessarily prove them the "deformed offspring of highbrows?" Would not a novel by Conrad, a picture by Cezane, or the music of Richard Strauss be equally over their heads? Yet to these the world gives honor, and in the end, money. By admitting that the tests which we apply to all the other arts are inapplicable to screen writing, are we doing anything but prove that the photodrama can never be any more than a poor relation to the arts, unsuited to the highest uses of society and therefore not entitled to the highest forms of consideration?

Before we come to any such conclusion it seems worth while to go into the question of the presentation of photodrama for some such measure of success as is applied to the other arts, the measure of time extension rather than seating capacity. Is there any inherent reason why a good screen play cannot go on being a good screen play from year to year, in the way a good book goes on being a good book? Is there any inherent reason why a good screen story isn't susceptible of frequent revivals

The Measure of Success

Is it to be determined by immediate box office returns or by a photoplay's lasting qualities? Mary Austin, eminent novelist, playwright, and poet, and one of the pioneers in the Little Theatre movement in America, hits straight from the shoulder at what she believes to be motion picture fallacies.

by different players who may bring new interpretations, as is the case with a good spoken play?

Isn't it the case that the only argument against the test of time extension is the almost insane insistence of screen writers and players and producers for *immediacy* in their returns? I ask to know, as our friend Hashimura Togo would say, because the answer is going to make an enormous difference in the attitude that I, and many other thinking people are going to take on the question of screen censorship which will presently rage through the country.

In considering the work of a literary artist we have to take into account first the truth which he presents, and the technique with which he presents it.

Joseph Conrad probably has the finest English style and the profoundest insight into human motives of any living writer.

In adapting him to the screen it would be necessary to preserve that high insight into motives, and at the same time to express it in a screen technique which for mastery over the medium, would be equal to Conrad's prose. Even then, before calling it a failure, we would have to subject the work to the same test that his written work has successfully undergone during the past twenty years. Now as a matter of fact, in no case that I can recall of the screen presentation of an "eminent author" has this been done. Leaving aside the question of technique, which varies among producers as it does among authors, I have never seen a film made from a story of the first rank that did not begin by *violating the truth that writer tried to express.*

Let me illustrate by a story which was not the work of a single writer, but was actually composed by the collective genius of the people, the masses which the screen writer hopes to serve. The story of Joan of Arc is one of the most precious of the world's stories, and no amount of historic investigation has been able to shake the truth around which the story is built, the story of the virgin youth, who without any worldly experience, untouched by any passion but patriotism, was able to accomplish things, that after the lapse of centuries still appear miraculous.

But the first thing the producer did who tried to render this masterpiece on the screen, was to *violate its essential truth* by having Joan personated by a mature woman, whose whole personality was stamped with worldly success, whose success in opera was indissolubly associated with the intensely personal passions of sexual love and jealousy and revenge. Going further, the producer undertook to replace the deeprooted human appeal of the story of spiritual inspiration, by a story of sex interest.

People do like a sex story, but this story of the virgin youth is older. There is no race or tribe in the world that has not some version of it. There is more material in the subconsciousness of any audience to support that true story, than could be brought to the support of the made up, rather pale sex interest which was all the producer dared to give to his version.

A really "eminent" literary author would have made it his business to search out the human heart for the psychological roots of the virgin youth story and the universal human faith in spiritual inspiration, and have used historical color and incident merely to give force to his presentation. Had this been done, with the quality of technique which DeMille's Joan displayed, I have no hesitancy in saying that it might easily have remained the standard interpretation of that story for a whole generation, or for two or three.

It is a mistake to attribute the withdrawal of Joan the Woman from the field of permanent interest, to the censorship of the Catholic Church. The Church, being highly organized, has the *power to enforce* a very considerable censorship, but it could and would have done very little had it not been supported by the subconscious pull of the true story as it lies deeply imbedded in human experience.

Before going into the possibilities of censorship, which are imminent, I want to develop one or two other points in connection with the inexhaustable subject of the presentation of the truth about human experience on the screen. For I am still unconvinced that the screen is inherently incapable of presenting truth on the same levels with other arts. I believe that the difficulties in the way are chiefly in the failure to understand the deeper levels of the psychology of audiences. The average screen writer, motivated by the passion for immediacy, aims at nothing but the top layer. When he tries to go deeper he is likely to fail, first through not knowing what is in the deeper layer, as in the case of Joan, and secondly, through the failure to use the same idiom as the audience. So many sincere attempts to produce high quality photo plays make the same mistake that a story writer makes when he interlards his pages with foreign words and phrases.

Early in my experience of organizing Community Theaters, I was called to an isolated mountain town where few of the inhabitants had ever seen a play of any sort. To show me that they did not lack talent, the young people had prepared the only play they had access to, namely, scenes from the Merchant of Venice, from the fifth reader. It was given without costume, and I kept wondering what Portia would do in the court scene. When she finally appeared with her hair tucked up under a cap, wearing blue denim big overalls, I barely restrained myself from laughing by observing that the audience had not even smiled. What I discovered later was that none of them had heard of Judge's gowns, the only Judge of their acquaintance, the local Justice of the Peace, being an habitual wearer of overalls. On another occasion an allegorical pageant was given in which occurred the character of Fortuna, described as "dressed in classic Greek costume." But the young woman who personated her, appeared as a gypsy fortune teller with complete success, for on investigation it turned out that that was the connotation of the word Fortuna in the mind of the audience. The "classic Greek" dress, would have been as unintelligible as a Greek word. In a play written by an ardent Nonpartisan Leaguer for the Little Country Theater at North Dugout, Dakota, in a scene representing the home life of a millionaire, as millionaires are understood in North Dugout, the butler announces Mr. Rockerman come to call on Mr. Astorbilt, who before having his caller shown in, slips on the shoes which he has removed in the comfortable after supper fashion your father used to have on the farm.

This is what I mean by the idiom of the people, the use of which is a legitimate device, almost an obligation of the conscientious artist. In every attempt to render a truly great story—in the sense that a story by Conrad is great—it seems to me that the screen artist has lost himself in confusions between the essential human truth of a story and the factual idioms in which it is presented, falsifying the truth and straining after a meticulous and confusing presentation of facts. One winter which I spent in a small New Mexican town where there were "movies" three times a week I tried, with scarcely ever a success, to get a succinct account of the story of the evening from some member of the audience. It was almost always lost under the multiplicity of new and frequently foreign words, that is to say, customs, dress, furniture, landscapes which engaged the interest without arresting the intelligence. Therefore, before I will accept the conclusion that the work of a truly great fiction writer cannot be successful on the screen, I must see a production in which the essential truths have been found and arranged in the most emphatic manner, and the number of unfamiliar idioms of presentation been reduced to the minimum.

Fortunately, the whole business of screen writing is being forced into the consideration of these principles by the gathering cloud of censorship. Prohibitive censorship is the last resort of a feeling, on the part of the public , of not being able to meet the situation with discrimination. Because they do not know exactly what to cut out, they end by cutting out too much. And apparently the average screen writer is doing everything he can to contribute to the feeling of helplessness on the part of the audience. He is using his knowledge of the psychology of the audience in the attempt to carry water on both shoulders, by calling an objectionable situation by an unobjectionable name.

In the play called "The Affairs of Anatol," the man who wins the silly girl with a string of pearls, calls it a "wedding present," though it is perfectly evident to any critic that the author knew, and most people know, that girls who are won with pearls do not have to have a wedding ring thrown in. The "wedding present," however, "gets by" with the top layer of the audience-mind, for the moment. The subconscious sense of its falseness, however, remains with them and produces exactly that feeling of the deliberate confusing of ethical standards which drives the average citizen to blanket censorship. Nothing in the world is so implacable as the masses once they are convinced that an attempt is being made to throw dust in their eyes, and some of the dust being thrown is amazingly palpable.

The American public may not be very sure just what are the moral issues of life, but of one thing they are absolutely sure, there *are* moral issues, and the health of the community depends on their being kept clear and well defined. As the idiom of the screen becomes more familiar they will the more readily detect the purposeful falsehood, and it will be a very bad time for screen writers while the public is finding out what to do about it.

I do not mean to say that every screen play must present profound truth, but it

must be *true within the limitations assumed, and as far as it goes.* I have not anywhere seen it stated that the great extravaganzas, which are among the greatest popular successes of the screen, succeed by observing this principle. Charlie Chaplin never falsifies a single gesture, never admits an incident that is not strictly harmonious with the original conception. He is a great artist in the same way that the author of "Alice in Wonderland" is great, for the moment the primary condition of Alice is stated,—i. e., dream psychology,—everything is absolutely in keeping with that condition. Charlie Chaplin's truth must not be minimized because it is truth to a fantastic concept, because the fantastic streak in human nature is as old and as deeply rooted as the story of the inspired virgin. And the amazing thing about Chaplin's success, the one most completely overlooked, is that it has *overcome the element of time extension in appreciation* which is so difficult for the great artist to survive.

Thus, far from agreeing with those who think that the great literary artist has no place in the field of photodrama, I am looking forward to screen development as a powerful aid in accelerating the rate at which a great literary artist may become known and enjoyed during his life. I do not suppose that the time element can be eliminated altogether. I see no reason why a man should object to having his work brought back and represented in repertory year after year, nor why he might not be willing to spread his returns a little thinner for the sake of having them last longer. It is on the willingness of screen writers and producers to explore and, in the highest sense, exploit the deeper and somewhat slower levels of the audience-mind that this possibility depends.



Then May You Write

By J. R. McCarthy

When you know the tragedy of the setting sun,
And one day obliterated
For the lousiest of laborers—
A whole day lost
And the Earth whirling on—
Then may you write of sorrow.

When you know the thrill of the child
As the robin sings at sun-up—
The fair bright day for games
And romping and shouting and laughter—
Then may you write of joy.

When you have seen
The young girl, new-breasted,
Dancing down the sand against the sea—
While the crumpled old woman sits by a window
And watches and dreams and remembers—
Then may you write of life!



SO long as you think of a beautiful woman in terms of legs and breasts and proximity, just so long are you a fit companion for the censor and may wallow at home with him in his mire. The sunrise on a mountain-crown, a young deer under canyon cedars, a girl dancing in the dusk—these are three of nature's songs. No philosophy of man, no decadent perversion of religion, can make any one of them unclean.



ONLY a fortunate few understand the poetry of words. A larger number enjoy the poetry of music. But the poem that reaches the mind through the eye—the poem of pantomime, of misty mountains and storm-lashed seas, of valley and meadow and desert and plain, of sunrise and sunset—this is the poem through whose living music all may be reborn.



The Great Opportunity

By Wesley Ruggles

LANGUAGE was found to be inadequate by even primitive man to express fully any incident or interest or to portray satisfactorily his deeds of daring or prowess. He therefore supplemented his efforts by depicting with a pointed stick or stylus whatever his powers of artistry allowed.

Today when actual research proves that eighty-five per cent of man's education is ocular a new factor appears in the spread of public information, and it is the motion picture. Yet in comparison with what this factor is to be in the near future, it is as primitive as the pointed sticks of the cave man. That the motion picture is on the threshold of a new era, and that it will have paramount influence on the destiny of the people is the concern of the thinkers of the world. Man, they say, becomes a part of all he sees, therefore, to see better pictures is to be a better man.

What has this reference to hieroglyphics and cave men to do with you? Simply this: quoting comparisons is the best method by which to forcibly impress upon an audience the true value of the subject at hand. I have striven to illustrate that the motion picture creates an indelible impression that the printed page and language has failed to create.

Schools and churches the country over have added to their course of study and lecture, the motion picture. Educators who have heretofore devoted their time and intellect to the compilation of text books, essays and instructive short stories are now diverting their talents into the literary cinema channels, and are creating scenarios to be produced in motion pictures for educational purposes.

A group of men have just completed the motion picture production of the Bible, and ministers will leave off writing sermons to lecture with the film version of the Scriptures. Five thousand churches in this country have completely equipped projection rooms, and two hundred thousand smaller houses of worship have portable projectors. Does this not further evidence that the motion picture will eventually supplant in great part all other methods of instruction and entertainment?

Now, aspiring writers, your work commences here. Before we can produce pictures we must have scenarios, and if these pictures are to adequately supply the increasing market the bulk of them must necessarily be the creation of the new writer. The work of the literary lights and professional scribes will not supply the demand.

"To recognize a need or a fault is the part of a critic; to take initial steps towards betterment is the part of a pioneer," says Wesley Ruggles, director of "Slippy McGee" and many other photoplay successes. Mr. Ruggles vividly points out the screen writer's sources of inspiration.

It is all right to say that the art of story-writing and the art of the screen are twin arts; but it is misleading to the new writer. One who knows both arts knows that there is a mighty difference and that the difference is greater than any likeness between the two. Screen art must take its inspiration straight from life—the source of all true inspiration without the intervention of the literary middleman. The work of the literary man is serviceable for the screen only when it carries a great idea that may be translated into pictures from the story. There have been too many stories, the work of professionals of late that have reached the screen, carrying no message and no box office attraction.

It is often hard for the story writer to understand that simple literary craftsmanship has little or no screen value—that the clever phrase or brilliant epigram is not a picture; that the best of his performance is of value only when adaptable to pictures.

Adaptation and scenario writing has to do with IDEAS, CHARACTERIZATIONS with PLOT, but nothing whatever with STYLE. True literary screen art must rest upon the story CONCEIVED and VISIONED for the SCREEN and not for the PRINTED PAGE.

New writers are prone to resort to flowery passages and "high brow" expressions. The scenario editor is not looking for expanded vocabularies—he wants IDEAS.

Let the new writer realize the value of story suspense. Working up to the denouement or the moment of revelation when the audience is "let in on" the story, is unquestionably the punch of a picture. The new writer must beware of coincidence. Coincidence does not enter into every-day life. It is bad form to use it as a basis for your big scene or scenes. Your audience will say, "That couldn't have happened," or, "No such luck." Do not cheat your audience by taking an easy way out of a difficult situation.

Original, novel, human plots with color, life and pathos, with sometimes tragedy entering into their composition, and you have the basis for a salable story.

The writer who starts his story off in dynamic fashion usually loses his suspense early in the game, and resorts to exaggeration, and inconceivable situations to keep it moving. This is the great fault of ambitious screen writers. Beware of caricature. Make your characters human. Si Hicks of Podunk corners is not the hayseed individual of the comic supplements—he is a neat looking automobile-riding movie fan. He is human—make him so in your stories.

Submit your stories in synopsis form. For example, "Robert lingered in the doorway uncertain and with noticeable hesitation before entering the room. He should register trouble, doubt, uncertainty. Cut to the room and we see Forman talking to Mrs. Albright. Smith is insistent and almost threatening in his attitude. Robert comes into the room and looks coldly upon the pair, etc. . . . ."

The most favored synopsis is the one that can clearly depict in the fewest words a story in action. It would be my suggestion to the new writer to obtain a prepared course of instruction on scenario technique. It will enhance the salability of your script.

Aspiring scribes ask me why it is that I don't go in for story writing inasmuch as I feel confident in proffering my advice to them. I have chosen the directorial branch of the motion picture industry and intend to stick to the job I have started. Efficiency is obtained only by concentrated and cooperative work on the part of every individual who contributes to the great scheme of motion picture production.

To recognize a need or a fault is the part of a critic; to take initial steps towards betterment, is the part of a pioneer. The time was never so opportune for the new writer. In confident assurance I say that the budding scenario writers will be a constructive contribution to the new cinema art.



Ballade

By J. N. Cornelius

For mortals, disappointments stalk abroad,
And man must oft deny the wish to go
To view the charms of places others laud,
Beyond the sapphire seas' unresting flow;
And dreams get lost, he can no longer know
His youth's sweet raptures and its careless glee,
But Modern Magic issues her decree:
Forgotten joys come forth at her command
And hold high carnival, a jubilee,
Upon the silver screen of shadowland.

So, Prince, why suffer from that plague, *ennui,*
Why let "black butterflies" triumphant be
When all of life holds out an eager hand
And earth's enchantments all are yours to see,
Upon the silver screen of shadowland?



DON'T wait on inspiration; attack your subject and your typewriter more fiercely than ever—you can blast your way to inspiration.

Wings

By Ruth Cross

NOT so long ago, I heard a noted journalist and psychologist venture the assertion that people of average—and a little more than average—intelligence go evening after evening to the movies, not because of the play, but *in spite of* the play. He went on to explain that the continuous and rhythmically repeated motion produced by the passage of the film over the screen acts in a measure hypnotically upon the eye muscles of the spectator and reacts in turn upon his entire nervous system. The result is a delightful and altogether desirable relaxation of the intense strain under which we as a nation unfortunately live. Hence, thus spoke the oracle, the mushroom growth of the cinema industry; hence the nightly onslaughts of T. B. M. and T. H. W.'s and tired everybody elses upon the picture palaces!



RUTH CROSS

The young authoress of "A Question of Honor," a recent starring vehicle for Anita Stewart, warns screen writers against underestimating the public. She says: "I doubt whether a story ever has been written or ever will be written that is too artistic for the public."

Whether the noted one invented this ingenuous bit of fiction to account for his own — confessedly—regular attendance at these same picture palaces is of course matter for conjecture. At best, the story only hints facetiously at a truth which lies considerably deeper.

People of every age, class and condition of servitude go, I believe, night after night to the movies, not merely because they are tired in body, over-wrought in nerves, fagged and jaded of soul; neither wholly because they want to be amused and entertained. They go seeking wings. They go because for at least an hour or two they long to be lifted clear of them*selves*, to get their feet off the too solid earth, to be caught up into a rarer, a more highly charged—yes, even a more intense atmosphere. In this respect, perhaps, the movies are the most direct compensation for the Eighteenth Amendment!

John Henry Smith yearns to forget that he *is* John Henry Smith with a wife and four babies to keep on a pay envelope of twenty dollars a week, to forget that the rent was raised again last week and that he doesn't know where the deuce he's going to get the money to pay the milk bill and the butcher bill, et cetera, et cetera. Temporary respite from these nagging perplexities is the least, though, that John Henry hopes to buy with his seventeen cent admission ticket. He expects, for the space that he sits in the darkened theater with all the light that there is in the world apparently on that one flickering, incandescent square in the center, to *be* the man that he knows himself for—handsome, wise and brave, worthy of love, perhaps divine. Nobody else knows him for that man, but he knows.

And so he tucks away Mary and the kids and the rent and the milk bill and other cares too numerous to mention under the seat along with his Johnny B., heaves the

petty worries of the day off his shoulders with a heartfelt sigh and is ready for all manner of high and perilous adventurings in far lands and distant climes—not merely the lands and climes of the Travelogue, but in places of the spirit immeasurably remote.

There is nothing, I believe—not even music, which has tremendous dynamic power—that can so readily touch off this particular fuse, explode, release, free the dammed-up avenues to the hidden world within, as drama at its highest and tensest, its white-hot levels. As in the fairy stories of old, you have but to wish to fly, to press your foot ever so lightly to the ground, and you are off—on wings!

The case of John Henry Smith is of the simplest. If we could see through clairvoyantly to the heart of every man and woman standing in line at the box office of some popular theater, we writers and would-be writers might understand the life-and-death nature of our jobs—bearing in mind that "even the slightest fiction is a blessing to those in distress; not choloform itself a greater." Broken lives and hearts, shattered illusions, knotty problems already too long struggled with, worry, illness, pain, despair, incipient suicide and even murder; on the other side, happiness seeking to intensify itself, love that waxes stronger on the dramatic struggle of others to attain that which the real lover knows himself already to possess, youth and success and the joy of life at its hottest and keenest, striving to become still more poignant and profound—all these offerings and a thousand beside are laid nightly on the knees of whatever gods there be that preside over the destinies of film-making.

From writer, actors, director—but most of all, I think, from the writer—these people ask only that for a certain brief time we create for them a certain peculiar kind of illusion, that we allow nothing irrelevant to break through, nothing to jar, to sunder and dislocate; in short, that we make it possible for them to dream their own dreams. Whether this is accomplished by the magic carpet of romance, by the splendor of epic and spectacle, or more simply and more effectively by dramatizing the vital and beautiful moments of our daily life, whether to the rhythm of laughter or tears, matters little. The essential thing is that it be done honestly and with sincerity.

Personally, I doubt whether a story ever has been written or ever will be written that is too beautiful or too artistic for—John Henry Smith. There is, as always, a great hue and cry about giving the public what it wants. It seems to me rather a case of Hobson's choice. The public takes what it can get, and being incredibly good-natured and pathetically inarticulate, registers so few kicks that we fatuously suppose it is getting what it wants.

By "beautiful" and "artistic"—the latter word seems to exist so continually in quotes in the best movie circles that one might suppose it had gone and gotten itself quite out of the pale of things photodramatic!—I think we all understand nobility and originality of theme, sincerity in motivation, inevitableness in the logical working out of plot, truth-to-life-ness in characterization, honesty in thought and workmanship. Above all, a certain quality of spiritual beauty, which is the touchstone that sets off the marvellously intricate and delicate machinery that controls another man's dreams, unfolds his badly crumpled and jealously concealed wings.

If more photoplays were written with these basic essentials in mind, we might yet, I believe, rid ourselves of the unwelcome specter at the feast, censorship! It is not merely the exploitation of crime and impurity on the screen which corrodes and disintegrates the moral fibre of the one who beholds it. It is the tawdriness, the falseness and insincerity of what lies back of them in theme and motive and character. It is no more possible to take a vicious, untrue and immoral attitude toward life and sugar-coat it with feigned piety and respectability for the express purpose of getting by the censor than it is possible for a woman of the streets to plaster over the brazenness and evil in her face with innumerable layers of powder and paint. On the other hand, so long as a story is sound at the core, it may parade all the Seven Deadly Sins in order and yet leave the beholder with a sense of purification—even of spiritual exaltation. This was admirably shown in John Barrymore's splendid rendering of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.*

Let us take care that when John Henry Smith and all his kind, great and small, come then asking us for wings, we do not give them millstones instead.

Star the Story

By James Woods Morrison

ALL of you who are regular patrons of motion picture theatres and all of you who are ambitiously and conscientiously trying to prepare yourselves to write for the screen, in fact, everybody who is at all familiar with the current trend of screen plays agrees that one of the most glaring faults in the average photodrama is its story. Most of you, too, have tried to analyze pictures after you have seen them with a view to determining the weaknesses in the stories that made them fail as good screen entertainment. You have been successful in varying degrees, each according to his own knowledge of what constitutes a good film-play. Your analysis, however, has failed, I think, because you have considered stories individually and failed to appreciate the importance of many factors in the motion picture business which enter into consideration of stories.

We players, who are thoroughly familiar with the details of the industry which are unknown to the outsider, are in a much better position to see a fault and trace it to its inception. We, who have preferred not to affiliate ourselves with one company but rather to sign contracts for each of our pictures separately, have an opportunity to watch and study at first hand the methods of many producers and to judge the relative merits of their divers systems of procedure. Each of us has developed his own theory as to the reason for what are admittedly bad screen stories; perhaps one of us has found the true one.

Several years ago, D. W. Griffith was making two-reel pictures, many of which are still mentioned among the screen's best dramas. The Vitagraph company, shortly after the passing of Biograph, took its place as the leader in the field. Albert E. Smith and J. Stuart Blackton, founders of Vitagraph, have a long list of truly fine pictures to their credit. Other producers, of course, have made really worth-while pictures, but I think there are no others who offered as consistently fine screen stories as did those two.

What strikes me as the significant fact in the marked success of both Biograph (D. W. Griffith) and Vitagraph is that at the time I am discussing neither of them starred any of their players. Griffith, as a matter of fact, has never starred an actor in any of his screen dramas. It is my contention that the star system has been responsible for the lack of good screen stories and I think that screen history will bear me out.

"A Significant Fact

in the marked success of both D. W. Griffith and Vitagraph is that at the time I am discussing neither of them starred any of their players," says James Woods Morrison, who represents the highest type of motion picture player—he is an artist of the first rank. His viewpoint is most clarifying.

At Vitagraph, stories were read with a view to determining their adaptability for screen presentation. Nothing else entered into the choice of plays. When a play was selected for production, a cast was chosen from the stock company and each role, regardless of its importance, was intrusted to the player who was judged best suited to it. Clara Kimball Young would play a leading role in one production and she would appear within a week or two in a few scenes of another. All players were stars; and, at the same time, there were no stars,—all of which seems like a paradox, though it is actually a fact. If I were starred in a picture, there was no implication that I was the best known or most popular actor in that picture, but merely that my part happened to dominate.

Since that time stars have developed. The public, alone, was responsible for that; but the public was totally unconscious of the fact that its demand for stars might affect the quality of screen stories. But

such has been the result. As long as stars continue to make pictures on regular schedule so that they are limited in the time between photodramas when they must search for new stories, screen plays are not likely to improve.

Today the scenario department of a film company reads stories, which are considered first and chiefly as vehicles for stars. Many worthy plays, in which no one character dominates, are rejected by screen producers for only that reason. Other stories, excellent photodrama material in their original form, are practically destroyed by continuity writers, who in their adaptations, must build up the star part far beyond the requirements of the author's theme.

I do not maintain that there is no place for star pictures. I am sure that there is. But I do feel that the policy of making eight pictures a year, starring a certain player, in stories rebuilt to fit him, will not bring about the development that the screen so urgently needs.

There is a chance for better pictures, however, and there is now, more than ever before, a splendid opportunity for those who are ambitious to write screen stories. Prepare yourself to write stories that are good screen stories. The time is at hand when photoplays will be considered on their merit as such; and it is no longer necessary to distort your ideas so that they may be made to fit a star.

Several producers, though they do appreciate the sales value of personalities, are making "all star productions." The fact that there is rarely a star in an "all star production" is interesting and amusing, but it does not alter the fact that in these pictures lies the hope of better screen stories.



Soliloquy

By Helen Campbell Jeselson

To censor, or not to censor, this keeps us guessing;
Whether to leave movies unexpurgated
As the playwrights intended, a la Shakespeare,
Or to have self-righteous men, to-wit: the Censor Board,
Review and prune so that the child may see them
Unabashed and with no eyelash tremor—
This is a question that is up to us.
To censor—aye, to cut—and by a cutting
Mean we have false parts extracted, leaving plays
Still true to life—is what we all approve.
To cut—perchance to slash! Aye, there's the rub;
For in that process, what the plot may suffer,
All in the name of purity, as seen through eyes
Of Daniels come to judgment,—this makes us weary.
There's the very thought that makes us hesitate
To place the burden of judgment on a Board—
Public welfare with a Health Squad and Commissions
To regulate our moves and actions,
When we ourselves have each a mind with which to think.
For who knows not that censorship, after all,
Is individual—that what seems right to one,
Is to another, the very opposite?
That pruning should begin in one's own mind?
When that is done, what further need of censors?



WHY do so many young potential photodramatists choose as their maiden theme the story of their own lives? Several scenario editors have remarked upon this—and the fact that such stories are never accepted. The vain and the self-centered cannot know life, and will never create in any form of art expression.

The Sub-title

By Helen Sherry

TIME was when I resented the kinema —and that, deeply: I resented it chiefly by reason of its obvious tendency to increase the already deplorable mutism of the multitude. To the uncouth and the underlanguaged of a former day the spoken drama had been a school, not only of manners, but of verbal expression—a training in orthoëpy and in phrasing; the stage gave its public lessons in the choice of terms. Upon that happy state of things had come the moving pictures with their silent presentation of scenes, throwing these intellectually disinherited children still deeper into the jaws of that monster which is the ravening wolf at the door of the popular mind—inarticulateness.

Later, however, there came over the spirit of my reflections a change. I found that I had reached my conclusions upon rather too summary a view of the situation: in brooding over the advantages which the kinema withheld, I had quite overlooked the value of the things it did actually bring, especially in view of the needs of the masses: if the stomach of the people needed bread, its soul clamored for recreation—for shows at once cheap—in the sense of price—and effective, and this the picture show had brought us in abounding measure. At last we had achieved a democratic art, one at whose feasts the poor might sit as well as the rich, an art gloriously ministering to the cherished principle of equal opportunity for all.

But, as I am naturally a child of the Fronde and have to be ever slinging at something, I began to make war on the Subtitle. This was the fruit of my own reflection; but my spontaneous sentiment was at a given moment greatly enhanced by the support I derived from the views expressed in an essay contributed on the subject by Professor Hugo von Muensterberg. I cannot tell how much I resented those framed-in words that fell as an impediment upon the flow of the action—an island of stagnation in a surging sea of motion! Yes, the subtitle was an intrusion—an indefensible cut-in from the domain of another and unrelated art. And there I stood. I must hasten to admit that my views on the matter had an almost exclusively academic tinge; for, during many years, my physical condition was such that reading, writing, play-going, and all other activities requiring prolonged attention and scrutiny were practically impossible for me.

Now, the contrasting experience of recent months has again modified my views. The subtitle, to my mind, is indeed still a makeshift—the crutch of a limping picture, when viewed from the standpoint of cold technical rigor. But that is just where we must pause. In the course of cold classical criticism, no art sees salvation. It must eventually lose its chill; it must warm to the needs of its public; it must perpetually keep its finger on the pulse of a changing human spirit; it must be romantic, realistic, impressionistic, or what not; it must bend its course to fit the ever-changing curves of the sovereign mind. In obedience, therefore, to this law, the subtitle entered as a life-preserver to the rather bald sequences of the pure kinema. The picture had to follow the example of life itself, and bow to the spoken word, thus testifying to the higher reaches of expression attained by the symbols of articulate utterance. For language, that tardy conquest of the species, is but the victory of the spirit yearning and struggling to utter its more subtle relations through a finer if less vivid medium. It is

A Bomb Shell

hurled into the ranks of the conservatives is this article by Helen Sherry — particularly where she writes: "The subtitle is not unlikely to become an agency through which the people, weaned from poetry by the newspapers, ragtime, jazz, etc., may yet be won back to an honorable love."

in the light of this that we must study the functions of the subtitle.

Much has been made of recent years to emphasize the educational phase of the film play. It has perhaps not sufficiently been brought to the general notice that all phases of the kinema are educational—educational in the truest sense: they do not cram, pour in, but they draw out whatever is latent in the mind of the onlooking audience. Educative, to some extent, certainly, are the films which present bits of information, principles of science and processes of mechanical arts, and which, here and there, illustrate laws of psychology, and the like. But by far finer a discipline is achieved in various ways through the medium of the subtitle.

For instance, would it fall like a bomb-shell into the ranks of the conservatives to say that the subtitle is not unlikely to become an agency through which the people, weaned from poetry by the newspapers, ragtime, jazz and the various turkey-trots and tangoes, may yet be won back to an early and honorable love? This doubtless has rather an absurd ring; yet some of us fancy we have seen signs which point that way. Let us explain what we mean:

The other day, in the course of the reels which filed under my vision, a film showed a prisoner in jail whom his wife, who, by almost a miracle, had demonstrated his innocence when everything seemed lost, was visiting behind the bars, accompanied by the little son who had helped her in her devoted task. The group sat there in each other's arms, smiling happily through their tears. Upon this pathetic picture, the subtitle interjected its rhythmic comment: "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage." Next to me sat a group of young women of the most illiterate class. They were smiling complacently. I was wondering at the source of their pleasure. Meeting them again in the lobby, I asked about the quotation. They did not know it as such. It was simply—to them—a pretty phrase that fitted in nicely with the situation. Having myself ample other sources of poetic satisfaction, my own delight at the numbers was due mainly to a welcome sense of familiar passage appositely introduced. Rehearsing it before them, I noted two of those with softer faces repeating the lines sotto voce, smiling delightedly the while. I had noted something of this before; now I was surer of it.

But, it will doubtless be urged, why can't they read poetry at home or at the library? How can that little dab of it help them to appreciation? Why, those people could neither be coaxed nor driven to read a volume of poetry at home and they are not of those who haunt libraries. As for the effect of the little dab, there's a definite reason for it:

We all know, namely, that in painting a genre picture, the first step in the artistic process is isolation — isolation to secure unity of effect. Lifted out of the jumble of its environment—a jumble that makes for confusion and vagueness, and set up in conspicuous relief, the subject becomes at once master of the eye of the beholder, and the source of a definite impression, which a single touch suffices to render an aesthetic one. You pass, for example, an unkept barnyard in a dilapidated village, where a number of over-worked, raw-boned, hungry-looking horses stand about shivering in the chill twilight of late November, you are likely instinctively to turn away from the unalluring scene. A Raffaelli, on the other hand, will pluck one or two of them out of their dingy setting, and place them before you within the frame of his canvas, bringing sadness to your spirit and tears to your eyes—an impressive illustration of the truth of his doctrine, the Beauty of Ugliness.

Now, not a little of this magic is imparted to the written word on the screen by means of the secluding frame of the subtitle; in like manner, the phrase which on the pages of a book, would, with a score of others, upon perception, take its hurried departure from the eyes without leaving a dent on the consciousness, acquires on the screen a value and an importance seemingly out of proportion to the device employed; it is certain that it stamps itself indelibly on the mind of the spectator. It gives the mind time to wreak itself in reflection on its object.

In so many ways that within the necessary limits of these pages it would be impossible to enumerate them, the subtitle has become the guide of the little children as well as the more mature of the undeveloped intelligence which compose so large a part of the vast audience which it is the privilege of the kinema to embrace within the ever-widening circle of its arms. It becomes the pedagogue in the truest, because the most literal, sense of the term. It unobtrusively places a gentle hand under the elbow of those who tread, with a less firm step than others, the mazes of representation, at the same time throwing over the scene the faint but welcome light of a hu-

morous generalization. Consider this case: "Young Mr. Kirkwood comes to a sudden decision." This subtitle introduces at once the play and the scene in which a baby boy wakes from his slumbers and begins lustily howling for his mother. "I want my mama, I want my mama!" is the legend of a second subtitle. In view of rigid economy which rules the resort to the written word; in view further of the perfect pantomime furnished, and still further of the accompanying subtitle giving the very words of the child, the first (the introductory) subtitle might well seem a superfluity. Yet we feel that it is not so. It is a part of that framework of social culture which invests most of the verbal occasions of life. Through this bit of humorous comment, the author of the play establishes a distinct social bond between him and his audience. And that is becoming a recognized part of the office of the subtitle.

On other occasions, it supplies a touch of more obvious humor. A subtitle introducing a married pair in their own home, announces that "Mrs. X. believes in her husband and—keeps an eye on him." thus incidentally proclaiming that the slapstick and other forms of muscular facetiae are coming to prove inadequate.

The subtitle comes very near to taking the place of the herald in the ancient drama, and even of suggesting the butler in a well-appointed home, announcing the guests as they appear on the scene. Only, this butler takes the liberty of winking as he pompously declines the names and titles of his people. Thus we are, in a recent film play, introduced to Mr. X., "a multi-millionaire, who takes the goods which the gods send," the rakish angle of his fashionable hat giving no obscure hint as to the nature of these "goods."

Another film scene is introduced by a subtitle which informs the audience that Mr. and Mrs. X. are having a little private Hades of their own. Their gestures, facial contortions, and the all-sufficient subtitular dialogues vouchsafed us the next minute have amply acquainted us with the emotional relations of these two unhappy young spouses. The subtitle was superfluous, then? Why, no, its ministration was an effective, though subtle one. It helped to frame a mood in the public mind. The author was not minded to take any chances of the spectators falling short of intelligence and sympathy in the premises.

Certainly few things are more interesting than the multifarious unfoldment of the ministry of the subtitle. It would be unwise to draw the cordon of laws which are assumed to govern it too tightly at this moment. Wait and see; watch its smoke. In the meantime the unslackening progress of the world should teach us caution in both prophecy and legislation. In this attitude of mind, we shall doubtless feel graced to hear the announcement that the subtitle is the logical evolution of the Greek Chorus.



Magic

By G. Harrison Wiley

CEASELESS drone of a thousand mills; the clang of brazen gongs. Chattering din of river guns, or the cry of a crippled waif!

A wearied throng of sweating men; a curse from a foul-mouthed beggar! Garish lights on the city's scum, and faces that only grimace.

Endless hours of bitter toil; strife! Till our bodies are torn and twisted. A struggle to live 'neath doubled loads; the malice and greed that defeat us!

Oh, the hours that I've spent in longing for some swift free flight from care; to wander away from the tasks of today, to find Romance, like gold or jewels, in far off mystic lands.

Drums at dusk in an Arab camp; the bells of a great pagoda. The pound of surf on a distant shore, or the yelp of a lone wolf dog!

Feast of the lanterns at Nagasaki; a kiss from a lass o' the heather! Murmurous night in old Napoli, or Love on a coral strand.

A ship at sea with a mutinous crew; Shanghai! Out of the dark a Malay kriss! A fight for life in the Arctic night, or a trek o'er the desert's burning sand.

The Romance I've sought, I never have found, my Adventures have all been in dreams. Conjured for me, whom Fate has denied, at night, on a shadowland screen!

Comment from Student Writers

A monthly department to which students are invited to contribute
Edited by Mabel Odell

CINEMA STYLES

By Geo. F. Winans

A great factor having to do with the decline in art as well as in the general prosperity of the motion picture is the fallacy that there is a definite style or fashion in pictures. This is, first of all, an excuse of the producers of pictures (and in this case I heartily include the writer) for copy-catting, and it also serves as an excellent alibi in case of failure. It is so easy to say that a certain picture failed because "it was not in style. It would have gone all right last spring, but the public want something else now." The idea is ridiculous: There are no Spring, Summer and Fall styles in human nature. She is always the same, and when we see people walking over one another (if we ever do) to get to the box office to see a society play, it does not mean that they have gone society-play mad, but it does mean that that particular society play is a REAL play and that real good plays are so scarce that people are not going to take a chance of missing one when it does come along.

KNOW YOUR CHARACTERS

By Theodore Irvine

My advice to fellow beginners is: Find out what your characters would do in real life. No writer, surrounded by luxury, should attempt to characterize a down-and-outer on the point of starvation unless the writer himself knows exactly how the down-and-outer feels. The writer, never having been hungry, could not make his character live and breathe unless he could suffer with the child of his brain. The same applies to a writer, reared in lowly surroundings, attempting to create a social lion and making said lion live and breathe.

PERNICIOUS ADVICE

By Geo. E. Stockwell

Producers urge new writers to study their particular pictures in order to learn their requirements. Where is the reason in this? A story once seen is like water that has passed over the wheel, it is of no further use to that particular wheel, which we shall call the public. Producers rave because writers show no originality. Yet, were they to do as requested and study pictures of certain producers they would naturally try to write along the line of some one certain picture, because every picture being different, they must invariably pick out some ONE as a copy because they have permitted their minds to have been influenced by advice which seems to me pernicious. The writer who listens to such advice is bound to go wrong because the public most decidedly doesn't want to see another picture similar to one it has been before. If they do not get something new, they won't be interested. Therefore, isn't it best for a new writer to study pictures only for such information as applies to technique? Shouldn't he analyze pictures only as regards their building up and then endeavor to be original in his work as to treatment?

DISARMING THE FIGHTER

By Richmond C. Snow

In Washington, the real capital of the World, representatives of the leading nations are striving to come to an agreement that will limit armament and lessen wars. Might it not be a good idea for screen writers to gather in Los Angeles, the reel capital of the World, to discuss ways and means to disarm their battling characters and reduce fights?

We all recall that in the early days of motion pictures it was a poor film that did not include a wild chase and an exhibition of pugilism. As time went on the chase was retired as a scenario ingredient, but the fight remains an essential to any evening entertainment.

Why is this? Surely not because such scenes are true to life, for one may review a whole year's experience and fail to recall seeing a single upper-cut.

The stage has long since dropped the fist-fight as a thrill-producer. Guns have had a little chance in crook dramas, but statuary as weapons of defense are now very passe. Why doesn't the screen follow suit?

Fights seem to have been regarded as necessary "pep injectors" in many a thin yarn, and this tendency has been carried to absurd extremes. Heroes invariably defeat villains twice their size, as in "Cappy Ricks" where Tom Meighan quickly knocks out the pugilist that holds all kinds of records and towers head and shoulders above him.

So it looks as though we should have a few plays now without the "struggle everlasting." Let's try to tell a story that adheres to every-day life where we don't fight all the way up the ladder of success or have revolvers in every pocket and table drawer.

We are told to "study the screen" and it's good advice. But we must study it not only to see the kind of material to put into our stories but also to see the kind of stuff to keep out.

AMERICANIZING ANATOL

By Herbert Sutton

Why didn't "The Affairs of Anatol" get over bigger? Surely it has actors aplenty, and is well staged. The reason it flivvered is, because De Mille failed to remind the public that it is a "foreign" story and not an American one. Anatol is not an American he-character, and will not be for a century to come. Anatol is Schnitzlerian-Continental, despite the brains put into the Americanizing of him in the motion picture. Anatol as an American would have been the chief figure in a divorce scandal, if not the central figure in a gun tragedy, before the film story was half through, if he had been real American and his wife American born.

But don't misunderstand me. Anatol would have gotten over, and gotten over big, if only De Mille had produced his "Affairs" as a continental story.

Constructing the Scenario

By H. H. Van Loan

(Continued from the December number)

Put plenty of action into your story. Keep your characters moving all the time, and be careful not to have them do a lot of things which are not important in the working out of your plot. You must remember that the screen differs from the stage and the story, in that movement is the dominating element. The greatest second act ever written for the stage can be reduced to two or three scenes and one or two sub-titles, when transferred to the screen. Why? Because the photoplaywright realizes that he must keep his actors moving on the screen, and, unless he does that, his audience will walk out before the picture is entirely unreeled. A dramatist uses conversation and clever dialogue to put over his big punches, but the screen author has to supplement that dialogue with real big action. Action is the most important ingredient in the photoplay. There must be lots of it, and it must be necessary to the development of the plot. It mustn't be put into the script just to furnish movement for the actors. It must have a direct bearing on the outcome.

In fact, the point to remember in writing for the screen—and, it is the most essential point—is: First establish a reason for the story; then introduce your characters, and, after you have done that, make a dash for your climax. That's all there is to it. Establish a premise and then rush for the final scene. And, don't waste any footage on the way. Don't put in a lot of pretty stuff that has no bearing on the actual plot. Don't pad it with a lot of fluffy stuff, which has no direct connection with the theme, and only tends to slow up your story, to impede its progress. It only makes the picture seem much longer than it really is, and causes the audience to lose interest. Be sure that your story contains action, action, and then some more action. Mix a few thrills with it, flavor it with the sweet essence of romance, and spice it with suspense and intrigue. If you can, put some big human stuff in it, the stuff that brings a tear to the eyes of your audience. Then, chase that tear away with a smile. Then you've got them. If you do these things, the audience will have no legitimate reason for demanding its money back; and it won't want it back, either.

In fact, I believe the best definition of any story is, a premise and a chase: a chase between the good and evil influences, with the good always winning in the end.

It is advisable to limit the number of characters to as few as possible. Too many principals confuse the audience and complicate matters. This results in the audience mixing labor with amusement, and, those who go to the theatre go because they seek relaxation. They want to be amused and interested, without any great mental effort. Too many characters confuse the audience and make it difficult for the on-looker to keep count of them. Keep your cast down, and, when you do that you are keeping the cost of production down; and this is a very valuable item in connection with picture-making.

Devote considerable thought to the main title of your story. Don't accept the first title that comes to you. It won't be the best one for your story. Spend as much time in selecting the title for your story as you spend on the story proper. Of course, many times you will find the producer will change it, but, when you send your story to him you have every reason for believing he will retain the original title, and, if it is a really good title, and one that fits the story, and has box-office drawing power, he will retain the one you submitted. You may find, upon completion of your story that the working out of your plot has provided you with a better title than you had in the beginning. This won't occur to you unless you study it carefully after it is completed. Be sure that your title arouses curiosity sufficient to attract people into the theatre. Make it a box-office title. A box-office title is one that attracts attention, creates interest, and arouses desire. If it does these three things the producer will not change it. In addition to this, be sure to keep the length of your main title as short as possible. Remember the average space reserved for the incandescent lights, announcing the title of the picture in front of the

theatre, will not accommodate more than a dozen letters. It peeves the exhibitor to have a title of more than four or five words, and he has to fret and fume in his attempt to display the name of the production without eliminating some of the words. When he has to reduce the number of words in the title, it affects the neatness of the front of his theatre, and, exhibitors have told me, that the abbreviation of a title will have an adverse effect on the box-office.

The writer of scenarios must realize that the title is just as important as the story itself. Many a story has been sold to the producer because he was at first attracted by the title. A story that has a title with a "punch" in it will usually obtain a reading. The title is the first thing the producer reads, and, if it is a good, snappy one, it doesn't require much effort to make him read the rest of it. On the other hand, if the title is poor, the interest of the producer is not aroused, and he decides that an author who could not think of a more original title for his story is probably also incapable of writing an unusual script, and he decides he will not take the time to read it.

However, the judgment of the experienced scenario writer and the producer are not always infallible, when it comes to the selection of a main title. Every season there are many good photoplays, with fine plots, portrayed by excellent actors, which fail to reap the financial harvest originally predicted by the producers, because of poor titles. At the present time, there is a very fine picture which has fallen far below the return estimated by its producer, because the picture did not have the power to attract the people into the theatre. The title was not a good one. The title must have "pulling power," and, if it has not this power it will deny the exhibitor and producer thousands of dollars which they would otherwise receive.

In a recent article in one of the leading publications, Floyd W. Parsons wrote as follows:

"The next important evolution in the motion picture industry will be a marked advance in the quality of the stories filmed. Scenario writing is the most experimental and undeveloped end of the business. The picture producers are aware that an art which is a copy is never as good as a copy of Nature. For this reason, they are looking forward to the day when the original scenario will be the thing."

That day has already arrived. The producer admits right now that the original story is the thing. He knows it is the one big salvation, and that the future success of the industry depends on the original story. He confesses that he has had his fill of adaptations of books and plays, which, in order to provide screen material, have been twisted and turned and distorted, until nothing of the story, as written originally, has remained. The producer will also admit that he has made these adaptations against his better judgment. The public demanded them. In the future, the majority of pictures will be made from original scripts, written by photodramatists who know their screen and its technique.

Nine of the biggest successes last season were original stories. And, these pictures grossed between $500,000 and $750,000 each. In the future, the screen author will occupy an enviable place in the moving picture industry. At present the producers are employing the best literary talent obtainable to write their stories. Some of these writers are being paid as high as $100,000 a year. Isn't that goal worth striving for? Producers are paying as high as $10,000 for an original story, and, if they find something especially good they are willing to pay more. However, the writers who are receiving these good prices, spend time, care and thought in the development of their work. They are taking the screen seriously. They realize that the screen is a wonderful medium for conveying a message to an eager world, and that 25,00,000 admirers enjoy its comedies, its dramas, and its tragedies, every week. If the producer pays them only $25,000 each for five or six stories, he is still able to make a handsome profit on those stories; because they will be the best that the best screen authors will be able to write.



THE photodramatist who is contented with a small success may find that success slipping away—because he becomes afflicted with the sleeping sickness often miscalled contentment.



This Side of Nirvana

By Ted Le Berthon

The Screen Drama League

Alfred Hustwick's forceful editorial in our December number has evoked a wide response, persons from all sections of the United States wishing to become local representatives of the proposed Screen Drama League.

It will probably be sixty days or more before we can take any adequate action. By that time, we will have read the many suggestions submitted, and will be able to outline a definite plan for a well-knit organization that will be a social force of national significance, working for the advancement of the motion picture art-industry along artistic ,aesthetic, scientific and educational lines. Of course, the most immediate problem will be the stamping out of censorship.

In the meantime, those who wish to represent the proposed league locally may continue to send their names and any suggestions to me. I hope that early spring will find us prepared to launch The Screen Drama League with a solidarity, a clearly defined purpose, and a legal equipment that will make for soundness and intelligent direction.

Fannie Hurst Declaims

The futility of attempting to adapt novels for photoplays has never been better illutrated than by Fannie Hurst's unanticipated and extemporaneous address, following a private preview of "Star Dust," a film version of her novel. Turning to the audience, she said:

"I want to apologize to those of my friends who are here at my invitation to see this so-called version of my novel. The tawdry story you have just seen dragged across the motion picture screen in my name is not the story of my novel, as those of you who have read it must realize, but a conglomeration of trumped-up situations and titles. It is inconceivable that as an author I must be subjected to the humiliation of having this perversion of my ideas go broadcast over the country as my story.

"What you have just witnessed is an affront to the taste and intelligence of the beholder, whoever he may be, and an insult to the book and the author.

"I offered my time and service in the writing and adapting of the screen version. The offer was ignored, and the cheap, tawdry story we have just witnessed is the result.

"I shall take every step to have my name and the title removed from this so-called version of my novel. It is neither my theme, my story, nor my idea."

La Terre Filmed

Sinclair Lewis writes me from Pallenza, Italy, where he is at work on a new novel, that the French have made a remarkable film version of Zola's "La Terre." He says, among other things: "Here was neither a starring vehicle for a bright young cloak and suit model, a mass of trivia leading up to the bright moment when a cop shoots a crook, nor a sweet sobbing thing in which the naughty girl returns to home, Sunday School, and purity. It was a work of art. There wasn't a single star in it, nor a single close-up of a sportive kitten. Naturally, it was tragic, and naturally, it wouldn't 'go' in America * * * * * * *."

This is the rub. Mr. Lewis' "Main Street" was tragic and decidedly, unpleasantly realistic, yet it has been the outstanding popular novel and best seller in every section of America for a solid year. It is to be filmed, and I understand Harvey O'Higgins is making the adaptation. In deploring American taste, Mr. Lewis invites a boomerang. Personally, I believe the producers have been to blame. It happens that every artistic box-office photoplay thus far released has scored a box-office triumph; this information is strange, but true.

Brunton Sells

The expenditure of several million dollars annually in Los Angeles in picture production and in payrolls was announced last month, coincident with the sale of the Brunton studios by Robert Brunton to the United Studios, Inc., a New York syndicate.

In discussing the sale of the Brunton property, Mr. Brunton said:

"The New York syndicate plans to remove eight or ten producing companies to the coast, and that means the expenditure of millions of dollars in Los Angeles.

"I have for many months desired to en-

ter the producing field exclusively, but I could not devote my time to this with a big studio and its equipment on my hands."

The amount of money involved in the transfer of the property is not announced. Mr. Brunton established the first unit of his studios more than three years ago, and since that time has erected a number of stages, one of them said to be the largest enclosed stage in the world.

To the Script

Jack Cunningham as editor and Rex Taylor as business manager are to be complimented upon their weekly publication, The Script, which they recently inaugurated; this newsy, breezy journal circulates exclusively among members of The Screen Writers' Guild and The Writers' Club, and fills the proverbial long felt need. There is a camaraderie in its tone, induced by a mellow literary flavor and some deft touches of humor. In plain American, it's a fine little publication that will draw the boys and girls closer together for the general good of the cause.

Art versus Enterprise

In Los Angeles a battle rages between Ferdinand Earle, director of The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, and some of the business interests financing the picture. I infer that the din is caused by the "practical" business men attempting to improve Mr. Earle's work—perhaps on the grounds that it is too artistic! Raymond Blathwayt, in discussing the matter in Los Angeles "Saturday Night," writes: "Just imagine, for instance, an unmusical merchant endeavoring to infuse 'pep' and 'go' into a composition by Debussy, Grieg or Wagner!"

I hope to secure an article for an early number of The Photodramatist touching upon the salient points of this controversy.

The Foreign Films

It is not the policy of The Photodramatist to review foreign-made photoplays, as we are only concerned at present with the development of screen writing to an art in this country and the fostering of the original story, that the motion picture art this side of the pond may become individualized. To foster an international advance is too large an order. However, one can no more ignore the half dozen German photoplays imported than one can ignore a mountain. It is a moot question whether "Deception" has ever been equalled, much less surpassed, as a historical canvas upon which is painted the spirit of a national era. In both "Passion" and "Deception" there are moments of grandeur, of strong passion, and of desolate heart-aches that represent the photodrama at its utmost heights.

"The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari," that sinister, dimly dreadful, neurotic cinema, with its fantastic post-impressionistic settings—what loathsome sprite from the dark, tenebrous shores of Night could have whispered this wierd dream to the authors? Or did they imbibe some dizzying lyric elixir of madness? The ghastly green tint of the final scenes in the garden, how horribly suggestive of some nether-world, where unbelievable, unthinkable things might happen. Whether one fancied this gloomy cinematic concoction or not, it represents the most radical flight of imagination in the annals of Screendom.

"The Golem," with its black magic, its occult mystery and bewildering strangeness, was handled masterfully, although based on a legend which is hardly consistent with the religious traditions of the Jewish race. The scene where the old rabbi astrologer-magician performs the mystic incantation by which the breath of life enters the huge clay dummy, is one of the most impressive in screen history. Who will soon forget the flaming circle, and the flying fire which seems to be the result of some elemental atmospheric disturbance in the old rabbi's gloomy chamber? Here too, was a strange blend of background, the mustiness of antiquity warped to a futuristic accent.

"One Arabian Night" and "Gypsy Blood" were not up to the standard of the other importations from the Rhine country, and would have merely ranked with the average American program features had it not been for the superior artistry of the vivid Pola Negri.

However, the screen writer and the student of the photoplay will do well to see these imported films. They establish new possibilities, and are highly stimulative to the imagination. They are off the beaten track, and the American screen is in need of those who will leave the pack and become—lone wolves!

International

It is the intention of the Famous Players-Lasky Company to bring German directors to America to study film production and to send American directors to Germany to absorb foreign ideas and technique, according to a well authenticated report.

Both De Milles and Penrhyn Stanlaws are said to be slated for a study tour of Berlin cinema camps.

Gossip Street

From Hollywood Boulevard to Times Square

Bradley King is a very busy young screen authoress this winter. After writing an original, "Jim," declared to be one of the most astounding tales ever screened by the Napoleon of Filmdom—Thomas H. Ince, she immediately undertook the writing of the continuity of Gertrude Nelson Andrews' original, "Finding Home," and the adaptation of "The Indian Drum." After which Miss King, deciding upon a few days' rest, journeyed to Paso Robles, where she visited Ignace Paderewski—who made some valuable suggestions for the initial scenes in "Finding Home," which are laid in Poland. Now she is back at Culver City, working arduously on a new story—details later.

Mildred Considine

Mildred Considine has just sold an original to Universal for Marie Prevost. It was written in four weeks and sold in four days. She has also completed the titling of Pathe's "Woman, Wake Up!" starring Florence Vidor.

Roy Hughes Productions

Boots Talbert, erstwhile soldier of fortune, has written "Brought Back," an original photodrama—and has sold the same to Roy Hughes Productions, El Paso, Texas. Mr. Hughes announces that Talbert and Rubene Stubblefield are collaborating on another story for him.

Lady Jane Horton

Lady Jane Horton, formerly Associate Editor of The Photodramatist, and now with the Mission Film Corporation, writes that the "Mission" organization is "more than favorable to original stories and probably will not consider 'anything else but.'" Their present production is from an original entitled "Carry on the Race," by a hitherto unknown author, Clarence Hathaway. The story deals with mental telepathy and life after death.

Horner and Westover

Lottie Horner and Clyde Westover will soon be as famous as the celebrated Anita Loos-John Emerson team of screen scribblers. They have collaborated on three original photoplays, all of which have found a ready market. They sold "The Milky Way" and "According to Moyle" to David Butler and "The Man from Downing Street" to Vitagraph as a forthcoming Earle Williams vehicle.

Not the Clergy!

A reporter of the Hartford, Conn., "Courant," gazing into the night from the editorial offices recently, was shocked to behold the following electric sign atop of the Parsons Theatre:

Parsons
First Night Out
With Vivian Martin

Goldwyn Additions

Richard Butler Glaenzer, Carey Wilson, and Dedmar J. Edmondson have been added to the Goldwyn Scenario Staff.

Goldwyn has just purchased "Fame," by Charles Kenyon. A cynic might rise to the occasion and remark that fame is always purchased.

Originals

Fred Jackson has sold "The Black Marriage" to Pauline Frederick; Viola Dana is to star in Rex Taylor's original, "Daphne's Disposition;" Elmer Harris, Supervising Director at Realart, has purchased the following original stories: "Midnight" by Harvey Thew, "The Wee Small Hours" by Aubrey Stauffer, and "Through the Window" by Wells Hastings; production has been started at Brunton's on Emory Johnson's original, "The Midnight Call;" Geo. C. Hull at "U" has completed an original called "The Twice Born;" Sada Cowan has just finished her fifth consecutive original for Clara Kimball Young; Miss Young has also purchased an original by Louis Duryea Lighton; Will Payne has written, specially for Wanda Hawley, "The Truthful Liar;" Harvey Gates' "The Soul Seeker" is the current Dorothy Phillips vehicle; Anita Loos and John Emerson have written "Polly of the Follies" for Constance Talmadge, and C. Gardner Sullivan has just completed "Someone to Love" for Thomas H. Ince.

Signed Up

Charles Graham Baker has succeeded George Randolph Chester as Vitagraph Scenario department editor-in-chief; Nathan Stedman, writer and linguist, is now occupying the translator's chair at Realart;

Bert Glassmier, scenario and title writer, has been re-engaged by Mack Sennett; Arthur Statter has been added to Lucien Hubbard's scenario staff at Universal; and Keene Thompson has joined the Hal Roach forces.

Rawlinson Honored

Herb Rawlinson, Universal's new star, was voted to honorary membership in the Writers' Club which recently opened its new Hollywood club house. He was selected from among forty members of the New York Lambs Club now on the coast.

Hail the Guild!

A combination projection room and little theater, with practical stage for the presentation of plays by members, is under consideration as one of the early improvements for the club house of the Writers in Hollywood. It is planned to build an additional wing to the club house for this purpose, with seating capacity for about 250. Previews of pictures from all the studios are to be held in the evenings. Once a month an entertainment will be given on the stage, with one-act plays and other divertisements written by club members.

A Feminine Monopoly

Doris Schroeder, the vivacious young writer at Universal City, has done the continuity for "The Dangerous Little Demon" for Marie Prevost. Mildred Considine wrote the story.

The Tender Colossus

Harvey Thew is writing the script of "The Heart Specialist" for Mary Miles Minter.

The Scenario Editor's Plea

By Ronald McCaskill

Ye would-be writers, one and all, hark to my humble pleas!
I crave some boons at your ink-stained hands, with tears and on bended knees.
If you must make the gypsies steal the child—(Heaven forgive your crime!)
Do let the locket and birth-mark sleep: You've worked it overtime.
Later, don't let their ruffian chief seize her and "snarl with a leer":
"You're mine," as the hero shoots him down (we knew he would), from the rear.
Leave out the father who rushes in and shrieks with accents wild,
As he spies that blessed locket—"At last—my long lost child!"

When the junior clerk loves the President's girl he's saved from the runaway horse,
Must his rival in love who steals the dough be high in the office force?
And *must* the boy spend years in the pen till the girl obtains a clue
By finding the doctored entries which—the auditors failed to do?
Do write a story, if you can, without a neglected wife:—
And cut out the dark adventuress who stirs up all the strife.
Forget the lurid road house where the heroines get caught,
All compromised with villains, whose schemes they bring to naught!

Can't you forget the child of the slums with a voice like the great Farrar,
And the wicked old impressario who's eager to make her a star,
He'll save the dying brother if she'll yield to his evil will—
For an operation's needed and the girl can't foot the bill!

Leave out mamas with social aims and fathers losing dough,
Who force their weeping Madelines to wed the antique beau!
While Jack is rushing from the west, 'cos scratching in the soil
His hens had found the worthless land produced a crop of oil!

When the ne'er-do-well gets the girl in the woods and the hero's far away,
Must there be a storm and abandoned shack that forces the pair to stay
Thro' the fearful night; when Jim comes back to see the couple leaving
And, spurning explanations, goes, to leave his Gladys grieving!
Forget the wicked business man with all his wicked ways,
The pretty, pure stenographer on whom he *always* preys!
Omit the crooked brokers with their ever crooked stocks
Who put the ancient widow on the still more ancient rocks!

A few more things you might leave out: The automobile smash;
The foreman who is a cattle thief—The foreman Count de Dash!
The men who run illicit stills—The chap who peddles dope;
The artist with the Masterpiece—The kids who will elope;
Stealing logs in lumber camps—Girls with ankles sprained,
Getting jobs in cabarets with ease quite unexplained;
Yet even with these rotten crimes we'll manage to keep calm:
But, for the love of Mike, forget; "THE MORTGAGE ON THE FARM."

Photoplays in Review

By the Staff

MISS LULU BETT

Reviewed by Ted LeBerthon

It would not be exaggeration to state that William de Mille's production of "Miss Lulu Bett" is the most significant photoplay produced in America during the year just closed. Mr. de Mille, a thorough scholar of the drama, and a man who deserves sincere credit for unswerving fidelity to his artistic ideals, has faithfully transferred to the screen the essence and spirit of Zona Gale's realistic document. Here is a photoplay that validates the motion picture's claim to be known as an art. It is not pretentious, it has no splendiferous backgrounds; it is not painted on a vast canvas. But it is the work of a thoughtful, honest artist; is poignantly human and profoundly psychological. It is a grim, sordid fragment of life, desolately true, but illumined by fugitive gleams of pity and wistful humor. There is irony, and vulgarity, and derisory tenderness in this screen epic of "the little things in life;" and Mr. de Mille has relentlessly wrought a mood of futility, of humanity's hopeless beating of wings against invisible prison walls. The pathos of Lulu Bett is that of the truly humble, those congenitally and constitutionally unable to inflict harm, who become the "goats" for tough-fibred and softer well-meaning leaners alike.

The story is admirably constructed and intelligently handled in every detail. The acting, superb. To many, the story might seem to drag; but it is to be realized that such lives as are depicted always drag, that a swifter tempo or any intensification of dramatic effects would not have conformed to the mood. In such productions as "Miss Lulu Bett" and in such directors as William de Mille lies the hope of realistic art in the photodrama.

Synopsis—An elderly and grouchy dentist who is also a justice of the peace lives with his wife and two children in an old-fashioned home in a small town. With them also live the old man's sister and the wife's younger sister who is known as Miss Lulu Bett.

On the unfortunate Lulu is thrown the work of the entire household and she is left in the kitchen, a modern Cinderella. A brother of the husband's returns from abroad and tells the assembled company wonderful tales of his prowess in the wilds of central America. He is sorry for Lulu and insists on taking her into the room to hear his stories. Poor Lulu is very homely and dressed like a kitchen drudge. The young school master also takes a small interest in Lulu. The visiting brother takes the whole party to the city to a restaurant to dinner, including Lulu; here the fun is rather slow and someone suggests that they liven it up with a mock marriage and Lulu is married to the visitor. Lulu is all dolled up and looks quite presentable. Suddenly the old man remembers that he is a justice of the peace and therefore the marriage is legal and cannot be undone. Being a sport the visiting brother says he will abide by it if Lulu will. She agrees. Later she finds that the brother has been married before but does not know if his wife is still living or not. Lulu leaves and returns to her kitchen drudgery. People point the finger of scorn at her and she finally tells the young school master the truth. She and the school master frustrate the elopement of the younger sister and are seen by the old man who thinks they are the two people who are running away. A message is received from the brother saying that his wife is found to be living and therefore Lulu is free. She marries the school master.

"BITS OF LIFE"

Reviewed by Elizabeth Niles

From the point of view of novelty each of the four stories and this feature as a whole give the public something decidedly different. Just as the short story has its admirers who in this day of speed prefer it to the novel, so these short pictures will undoubtedly have their adherents. Of necessity the technique varies somewhat from that of the longer picture. The total dependence upon coincidence for the interest in the first picture would not be tolerated in a more pretentious undertaking with the intention of depicting a universal truth. This is intended for only one bit of life. The second story follows the more usual requirements of conflict, suspense, and climax, though it depends upon the irony of the situations to hold the interest rather than upon an appeal to the heart. At the end of the third picture, some one among the spectators was heard to remark in no unmistakable tone, "Oh fudge!" Only one reel has been wasted at any rate. True to dramatic principles the best story was reserved for the ending. With the splendid characterization of the Chinaman, the intense feeling between the oriental belief and the missionary teaching, and the deep sympathy aroused for the young wife, the story held the attention of every spectator. Through skillful production the doubtful scenes were slipped past the censors, and the coincidence of the man's head being just on the opposite side of the wall from the crucifix was fairly well motivated.

Synopsis—Four distinct stories strung together by the device of a letter from Marshall Neilan to the public make up the feature called "Bits of Life." In the first story, after a childhood of cuffs and perpetual hunger, a crook has gained wealth and position; as yet the detectives have nothing but suspicions against him. A pal just released from the penitentiary, wishes to borrow some money. The crook undertakes to show him how easily it may be attained. As they walk along a quiet park the crook stops a boy who is running and casting an occasional look behind him; when the crook demands the wallet the boy has just stolen, much to the surprise of the friend, it is forthcoming. The crook tells the corner policeman to follow the boy. Later in a gambling establishment, the crook pays small sums for a watch and a ring to the owners who pretend to think them of little value but who

must have money for their gambling debts. Just after the crook has given his friend the money he wanted, he sees a man lying unconscious. When he assists him, the detective appears and the man accuses the crook of fleecing him. The detective's search reveals the wallet, the watch, and the ring of which the man had been robbed earlier in the day before he was left unconscious behind the fence where the crook found him.

The second story deals with a barber who loves his wife and in spite of his deafness finds life very pleasant. One day, seeing a device through which he might hear, he saves his money and buys one. When he goes out with it the first time he is horrified to hear that a pretty little girl he has admired is being arrested. When he returns he hears one of his customers telling a smutty story at which the barbers laugh uproariously but which to him seems to contain no humor. Then he goes home expecting to hear his wife say "I love you," and instead overhears her talking with a friend about the stinginess of her husband and then hears her make an engagement with another man over the phone. He goes out into the garden, seizes a big stone, and smashes the instrument to pieces.

In the third story a young man on a golf course sees a beautiful girl. That night at the hotel he sees her come in to dinner; she is seated at a table near his. Presently a man whom the girl apparently dislikes addresses her as "Princess" and forces her to leave with him. The young man follows, and presently sees the man making love to her and then leaving her. He bursts in upon the princess and begs to be of assistance to her. Just as she finally agrees to fly with him, they are surrounded by East Indians and at the command of the man whom the princess disliked, these servants rush upon him with a huge knife and appear to be disemboweling him when the scene changes and the young man finds himself in an operating chair, the princess beside him in a white uniform and the hated man on the other side with a tooth in his forceps.

The fourth story is that of a young Chinaman, who has seen his father throw his three baby sisters into the river because they were not boys. On running away from home and coming to San Francisco, the boy grows into a wealthy merchant and operator of an opium den. He desires a young educated Chinese girl, an operator for the telephone company. The missionary clergyman agrees to the man's taking the girl if he will give up his opium den. He agrees and brings a fake bill of sale when he comes to get the girl. When their baby is born it is a girl. The Chinaman with his desire for sons to worship at his tomb, beats his wife most unmercifully and leaves her in great anger. Another Chinese girl, who too has been raised at the mission, brings the little wife a crucifix and nails it to the wall where she can see it. Blood seems to pour from the side of the Christ. On investigation it is found that the nail had penetrated the skull of the Chinaman lying in an opium stupor on the other side of the wall.

LADIES MUST LIVE

Reviewed by Ted LeBerthon

"Ladies Must Live" was the last work of the late George Loane Tucker, whose production of "The Miracle Man" still ranks to many as the foremost achievement in motion picture art. "Ladies Must Live," written by Alice Duer Miller, has a significant theme, is ingeniously plotted, and ably directed. Tucker was ever an inspirational character. All his work is shot through with the soft gleams of a diviner, wider pity—especially his filmization of "The Manxman." Tucker was probably the only director in America who could have so sympathetically interpreted and even spiritually enlarged upon "The Miracle Man." In "Ladies Must Live" there is, in the denouement, the same bowing to intrinsic values; the same emphatic assertion of an infinite power that moulds earthly careers. And until this denoument, a satirical, gay mood prevailed. The characters were selfish or cheerfully detached sophists—in fact, most of them were hedonists and heartless schemers. The words, "ladies must live," embody the philsophy of three of the central female characters; the word "well" might have been added.

Some may feel that there are too many characters introduced, but Tucker played his pattern well; at the tremendous climax there is no question as to each character's status. The dripping corpse of the little suicide waif is carried into the presence of the selfish gay ladies, and the old scrub woman tells them *why* death had been chosen. On the wings of her words are borne the spirit which melts away misunderstanding; as though across the skies these words enwritten had made their problems clear.

From the tears of those about me, Mr. Tucker's last message, half-satirical, half-idealistic, struck home convincingly. "Ladies Must Live" is not a pleasant photoplay, but what is more artistically creditable, is not gushily sentimental.

Synopsis—The story deals with the fortunes of women of certain social circles who, being forced to live, adopt certain methods of gaining their ends. Christine Bleeker, who has been educated at the expense of William Hollins, her wealthy brother-in-law, is designed by her father, a dependent upon his son-in-law, to marry wealthy so that his income might be increased. Ralph Lincourt, who is married, but living unhappily with his wife, is chosen to be her mate—when he obtains a divorce. But there is another woman in the case who likewise has set her cap for Lincourt and the two become rivals, although Christine finds him quite unlovable. Anthony Mulvain, an aviator, reputed to be wealthy, appears on the scene with his mechanician, Michael Le Prim, a modern cave man. Christine falls in love with Mulvain while Nancy, who has found Lincourt somewhat dull, finds Le Prim her ideal. Nell Martin, a waif, employed in the kitchen, is loved by the gardener. The butler covets her and the poor girl is bewildered. One day, Le Prim forces Nancy into an automobile and drives into the hills with Mulvain and Christine in pursuit. Mulvain forces Le Prim to release the girl who takes flight in an automobile. Le Prim follows in Mulvain's machine, leaving Christine and Mulvain miles away from home with night coming on. The night passes and the next morning Mulvain finds a telephone and notifies his friends of his whereabouts. Nell, driven to despair by the butler's exposure of her past, drowns herself and the body is brought to Christine's home just as she had announced her engagement to Lincourt after Mulvain confesses that he is penniless. There is consternation. But love proves unconquerable and Christine runs to Mulvain's arms content to live with "Tony" in a smoky town for the rest of her life.

From Pen to Silversheet

By Malvin M. Riddle

II—ARCHITECTURE, DECORATION, RESEARCH

EVERY age has had its particular style of architecture; every nation has been characterized by its peculiar art in building and construction, but there is one place where the architecture of every age, every nation and every period from time immemorial is to be found. That place is the modern film studio.

The architecture in a motion picture studio is the various settings which are erected for the pictures. These settings are the stage upon which the picture is enacted.

The construction of settings thus necessitates a department of skilled architects, draughtsmen and artists, which, in the studio is known as the art department. There, ideas for settings are originated, sketched as drawings and then laid out in blue prints, later to be executed by subsidiary branches of construction and decoration.

At the Lasky studio, where Paramount Pictures are produced, this department is headed by Max Parker, who, with his staff of artists, is able to keep ten pictures supplied with sets, the average number per picture being from fifteen to twenty.

After being supplied with a copy of the finished scenario, Mr. Parker and his assistants study it thoroughly, note the sets that will be required, how they are to be constructed, considering camera technique, the action of the characters, the period of the architecture and the location of the setting and other features dependent upon the technical construction of the story. They are rendered valuable aid by the research department, which supplies all available data about the structure in question, the period of architecture, style of furnishings, etc.

The art staff also have to be expert copyists. Often a picture will require an exact replica of some interior or exterior set or structure. One instance is recalled where an exact duplicate of a section of the lobby of the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco was built on the studio stage for the filming of scenes which had to match up with scenes actually taken in the lobby of the famous hotel.

Speed in building is as essential as accuracy. Where the commercial architect will take weeks to work out a design, the studio art department must evolve the plans and start construction in a matter of days or hours. Another difficulty of the work of the studio architect over the commercial artist, is the fact that the latter must plan only new structures, while the former must often plan and build structures which must look very old or antiquated, or bear the natural-looking marks of age.

Modern sets for photoplays are constructed most substantially and of durable materials — the same as are used in everyday building.

Often before building a particularly elaborate or complicated setting, Mr. Parker will prepare or have prepared for the director, a complete model of the setting or group of structures in order that he may gain a definite idea of what the work is to look like when completed and make any desired changes before construction work is begun.

Some of the difficult problems which have confronted the Lasky studio art department since the inception of the studio some years ago will illustrate the importance of absolute efficiency in this department:

Scenes showing the sinking of the Lusitania for an early picture starring Mary Pickford, entitled, "The Little American."

The construction of a complete lumber camp on the open studio stage, with pine trees, cabins and a river flowing by. This

No One Should Miss

reading this series, which started in the December Photodramatist, and which will treat of every phase of motion picture production, distribution and exhibition. In the first article, Mr. Riddle explained the handling of stories and continuities. In the February number, he will reveal the mysteries of Costuming and Studio "properties."

was necessitated by the fact that the picture was being filmed in winter and all lumber camps in California and other western states were flooded.

A setting built entirely of plate glass, constructed for a Fairyland vision scene in Cecil B. deMille's production, "Forbidden Fruit."

A completely equipped locomotive cab interior.

A complete Mexican village.

A full rigged sailing ship built on the open studio lot.

A north pole scene with Esquimo huts and icy atmosphere.

Scenic Decoration

The studio scenic artist of today is a high-class interior decorator.

In addition to this he is an expert camouflage artist and a perfect copyist. The controlling principle in his work, however, is the photographic value of colors. Under the eye of the camera colors are often very deceptive, and often a color which seems lighter to the eye than another color, might on the screen register a darker shade of grey than that color.

Remarkable strides have been made in the scenic art in the studio since the inception of motion pictures. According to Glen Dunaway, chief scenic artist at the Lasky studio, it is only a few years ago when the studio scenic artist painted in doors, windows and very often the kitchen stove, in settings made of canvas, and not infrequently the film spectator would smile to see the entire wall of a room sway under the pressure of a breeze.

A great deal of oil paints are now used, where then only water colors were employed. The many beautiful and striking decorative and camouflage effects are executed in the most genuine manner. Another item that requires him to be an expert specialist in studio work is the short space of time generally allotted him for his work. Where the commercial artist can take weeks to decorate and tint a room, the scenic artist must make his work a matter of hours. His instructions are always concluded with the command: Have the set completed by such and such a time.

The scenic artist's knowledge of the decorative art must include all periods in history and all nations of the world. In a few short months the department was called upon to reproduce a wide variety of settings, including the interior and exterior of St. Mary's Church of London, the interior of the hotel at Monte Carlo, an entire street and interiors in Shanghai, China, a San Francisco dock scene, and many other singular settings.

The commonest evils to be avoided are hilation and clashes in color schemes. Hilation is the reflection of light by a glossy surface which causes a light blur to the camera with the result that all photographic detail is lost. Often a painting on the wall, if photographed from a certain angle, will present such a hilation that the details of the picture cannot be observed. Such hilation is avoided by toning down or dulling the surface in question. Often two colors which seem to form a most artistic and beautiful combination to the human eye, will, when photographed, present a most inharmonious, discordant color scheme, which is very ugly and disagreeable to look upon. Only by a careful study and a perfect knowledge of the photographic values of colors does the scenic artist avoid such color clashes.

The art of camouflage is also a very important phase of the studio scene painter's art. He must make the imitation appear exactly like the real. Some of the commonest of such problems are included in the following examples: the camouflaging of compo-board squares and the proper laying of them so that when photographed they resemble a tile or stone floor; the painting of surfaces so that the photographic result is exactly the same as genuine marble; the tinting and decorating of plaster so that it photographs like bronze, gold or other metals. The artist can, with a few well-placed strokes of his brush, dipped in the right kind of paint, make a new brick wall like the side of a dingy tenement house. He can give to a new redwood panelled wall the effect of an oak panel, hundreds of years old. This very effect was seen in a large English setting in Gloria Swanson's starring vehicle, "The Great Moment." In a Russian setting of that same picture was what appeared to be a very antiquated, valuable oak cabinet. In truth this was made of redwood, duplicated from some old piece, and finished with the magic touch of the decorator, who added a hundred years' age with every few strokes of his brush.

Studio Research

What would you think of an artist who would paint a picture purporting to be a scene in a French village, but which in detail was sadly lacking in French atmosphere or was noticeably incorrect in this regard?

In the same way, the film producer, in the

present advanced stage of the motion picture art would be regarded as a rather slipshod artist if he did not pay strict attention to accuracy in detail in the architecture of his settings, the customs, manners, characteristics and dress of his characters, considering the period of history and the geographical locale represented by certain parts of his story. For the film producer is an artist—a very active artist, whose pictures are animated, moving expositions of life and humanity and it would be gross abuse of the vast educational powers of his product were he to neglect this important phase and misinform the screen-going public, which includes nearly all the public.

From this argument will be seen the necessity and importance of that phase of studio production activity known as the research department.

Such a department was founded in the Lasky studio some years ago by Mrs. Elizabeth McGaffey, who in previous years had travelled widely and had a goodly store of knowledge concerning architecture, customs, costumes and other facts about various countries. Being often called upon by the architectural and other departments to solve certain problems of this nature, she realized the necessity of a duly organized research unit, where records and files could be made and literature on such subjects stored. She made the suggestion, it was approved, and the new department was created, with Mrs. McGaffey as its head. The present perfection of the system in use in this department is pointed out by the fact that library students pay annual visits to the studio to study the filing systems and look over the literature.

Through the functioning of this department, producers are in a position to present real facts in Paramount Pictures. They never take things for granted, but ascertain the truth and present it in the pictures. This means a tremendous amount of work and detail, considering that several pictures are at all times under production in the studio. It is the educational center of the studio—the fact storehouse. One can step into this library and take a literary tour over the entire world.

In the earliest stages of preparation for a picture, Mrs. McGaffey and her assistants begin to pore through voluminous masses of matter, keyed by files and indexes, to obtain the various facts which will be required. They also have comprehensive photograph files.

Some of the outside sources to which the research workers often resort when unable to find their data in the studio department are the law library, the Los Angeles Public Library, museums, chambers of commerce and similar institutions.

The department is continually working ahead, storing up data and preparing against possible emergencies, in addition to its work of supplying facts for current pictures.

The sources of information in the shelves of the department, are encyclopaedias of all editions, historic treatises on fashions, travelogue books, works on architecture, costuming, customs, transportation, industries, laws, superstitions, creeds and rites and pictorial histories of wars and battles of every country, nation and people on the globe. The department has a standing subscription for fifty weekly and monthly magazines on architecture, travel, fiction, decoration, the theatre, motion pictures, outdoor life, etc. It is also a regular subscriber to a pictorial news service. Newspapers from all parts of the world were obtained by writing to a patent medicine company which advertised extensively.

(Continued in the February number)



THE screen-art anarch of Today will be smothered by arthodox opinion. It was always thus and always must be. A destructionist is never popular, even if he destroys millstones. It is always in some remote Tomorrow that the radical dreamer's vision is crystallized—and becomes orthodox.



FEW are able to write photoplays in a vein of profound happiness; only great sufferers can know of and write of great happiness. Does not the pendulum which swings the farthest in one direction swing the farthest in the opposite?



Questions Answered

Concerning the Writing of Photoplays

Q.—Is there any demand for Indian stories especially those in which no white men are used?

A.—At present there is practically no demand for Indian stories. During the early days of screen production, the Indian subject was so completely over-done that audiences became utterly tired of anything of the sort. Not long ago "The Last of the Mohicans" was produced and was a considerable success but this was an exception. Undoubtedly there will be a greater demand for Indian stories at some time in the future.

Q.—Is there any objection to gun play in what would be termed society dramas?

A.—The use of fire-arms is permissible if a logical motive exists. Dragging in guns and gun play merely for the sake of sensation is undesirable, however.

Q.—I have noticed that the demand seems to be for plays with a modern American setting but I am not particularly interested along these lines. I want to write adventures, romantic plays of foreign countries filled with color, thrills, and excitement. Does not the public enjoy such plays, and if so why must I write of "America today?"

A.—The demand for stories of modern American life is based upon reports from the distributors and exhibitors of photoplays. These reports are a direct reflection of what audiences in general seem to prefer. Some colorful and romantic tales of foreign lands have been very successful and there seems to be a slightly increasing demand for such subjects. Meanwhile, the greater proportion of stories that are being purchased are based upon life in America today. Exceptions may be made to every rule provided the story in question is exceptionally entertaining and dramatic.

Q.—When we visualize our characters, carry them through the play step by step, live with them, then write a detailed synopsis, why is it necessary for some continuity writer to tear it all to pieces and write it according to his or her visualization? The result is frequently a play that is not like the original plot at all. If that is the purpose of continuity writers, why may we creators of originals not write only a brief synopsis, giving the theme and plot, and let them visualize it as they see fit? It would surely be a pleasure and a satisfaction (if I should be so fortunate as to sell a photoplay), to see my own human characters acting in my own play. It would save the continuity writer a great deal of anxiety and trouble, and evidently be more satisfactory to everyone concerned.—A. P.

A.—This is a question that is constantly recurring in different forms. Some time in the future we shall, undoubtedly, arrive at a point where the creator of a story will not only do the dramatic structure in synopsis form, but will also write the continuity. This is, undoubtedly, an ideal condition. Meanwhile, in the struggle to obtain new material for the screen, producers must purchase many stories from authors who are not experienced in the finer points of technique or continuity construction. Where the original author is close to the center of production and is thus enabled to discuss details with the continuity writer, admirable and desirable collaboration may be achieved. Where the original author is at a distance, he must rely upon the continuity writer to do the final work before the manuscript goes to the director. The system of writing and producing screen stories by no means has reached a state of perfection, and there is still much that is unsatisfactory. There is constant improvement, however, and in summing up the productions of the past ten years, there can be little doubt that last year gave the world the greatest number of artistic and entertaining photoplays that have ever been produced and released within twelve months. The problems of the division of work between the original author and the continuity writer will be solved eventually, and those who are closest to production are inclined to be very optimistic.

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THE motion picture industry extends a genuine welcome to you to *try;* and offers you fame and fortune if you succeed.

The industry faces the most serious shortage of photoplays in its history. It needs, and will liberally pay for, 2,000 good scenarios. Not mere ideas, not patchworks of incident and action, but connected, workable stories for the screen. It is because the studios cannot obtain sufficient good material that so many thousands of patrons are criticising so many of the pictures shown.

And it may be that you, who can tell a good from a bad picture, can help.

"But," you say, "I am not a writer. I am only a housewife—or a salesman"—or whatever you are.

C. Gardner Sullivan, who started life as a farmer boy, might have looked at it that way, too. But he didn't. He tried; and now his income is $2,000 a week. He was not a "born" writer. But he discovered that he had creative imagination, a sense of dramatic values. The rest was a simple matter of training.

A nation-wide search for story-telling ability

Here and there among the millions of men and women who attend the picture shows the essential talent for photoplay writing exists. And the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, with the co-operation of leading motion picture producers, has undertaken to locate it. By means of a novel and intensely interesting questionnaire, prepared by expert scenario writers, it is able to detect the latent ability in any person who will seriously apply the test. If the subject interests you, you are invited to avail yourself of this free examination.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation is primarily an agency for the sale of photoplays to producers. Its Department of Education is a training school for scenario writers—a school that selects its students through the test applied by this questionnaire. Unless new writers are trained there will be no scenarios for us to sell, nor plays for the studios to produce.

In the three years of its existence the Palmer Corporation has trained many scenario writers and sold many of their photoplays. You have sat spellbound in your theatre and witnessed the work of Palmer students which was written in farm houses, city flats, and mining camps.

And the same studios that produced and paid for those pictures have rejected scenarios submitted by novelists and magazine writers whose names are known wherever the language is spoken.

The acquired art of fine writing cannot be transferred to the screen. But the native gifts, creative imagination and dramatic instinct—which means vivid story telling—are the life and the soul of the motion picture industry. Trained to express themselves in the language of the screen, these gifts are priceless to their possessor.

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.....P D-1-22

After that evening he did not call again

—and she never knew why



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3. A man, leaving his calling card at an apartment, drops it in an envelope before putting it in the letter box. Is that proper nowadays?

4. Is it good form for a woman to dress to look as young as her daughter?

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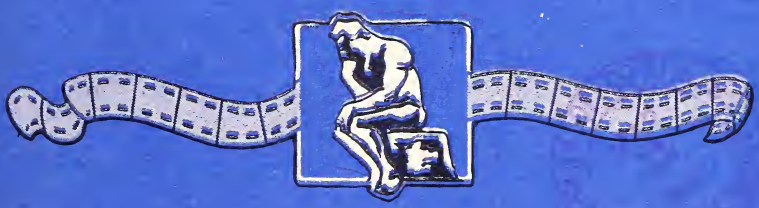
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P D-1-22

The PHOTODRAMATIST

THE SCENARIO WRITER'S MAGAZINE



IN THIS ISSUE

Articles by

RICHARD WALTON TULLY

WILLARD HUNTINGTON WRIGHT

KATHLEEN NORRIS

and

OTHER WELL KNOWN WRITERS ON TOPICS OF INTEREST TO SCREEN AUTHORS

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The PHOTODRAMATIST



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IF YOU ENJOY THIS NUMBER

you should enjoy the March number even more. Another of H. H. Van Loan's articles on photoplay writing will be a feature, as well as contributions from Bryan Irvine, Violet Clark, Alvin Wycoff, Geo. Wallace Sayre and other authorities on screen writing.

The Photodramatist, published monthly in the I. W. Hellman Bldg., Los Angeles, California, by the Photodramatist Publishing Company. **Copyright, 1922, by the Photodramatist Publishing Company.** **Subscription price—$2.50 per year. Single copies—25 cents.**

LEGAL SERVICE BUREAU

Palmer Photoplay Corporation

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation announces the inauguration of a Legal Service Bureau, to be operated in the interests of students of its Department of Education, and established authors.

Competent and adequate legal service, designed not only to fully protect authors' legal rights but to enable them to obtain United States copyright on scenario material, is now available to members of this bureau.

The Legal Service Bureau is under the personal supervision and direction of a nationally known attorney of twenty-five years' experience, and especially equipped with a thorough knowledge of the varied phases of Motion Picture activity from the writing of scenarios to the exploitation of the finished product.

A booklet descriptive of the service will be mailed upon request. Address Legal Service Bureau, Palmer Photoplay Corporation, 533 I. W. Hellman Building, Los Angeles, Cal.

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FEBRUARY, 1922 Volume III. No. 9.

The PHOTODRAMATIST

1922--The Screen Writers' Year

Original Photoplay Favored by Big Producers, Who See Prosperity Ahead

THE past few months have witnessed a peculiar condition in the world of motion pictures. Assailed by advocates of censorship, hampered by the same financial stringency that has held back other industries, criticized in a hundred ways by the coterie of blundering demagogues who are always ready to lead an attack upon any form of public entertainment, the producers have been a greatly worried body of men. Still, with a firm belief in the ultimate triumph of this newest art, which has brought more enjoyment to the masses than any other the world has ever known, the men behind the great studios have fought their way forward. Even when the outlook seemed blackest—when it appeared that a large portion of their huge investment might be lost and their carefully built up organizations disrupted—these pioneers in America's fifth industry have steered straight ahead.

The fate of the screen dramatist is so irrevocably allied with that of the producers, that the PHOTODRAMATIST has viewed their problems with unusual interest. At no time, however, has this magazine believed for a moment that the enemies of motion pictures would succeed in their attempts to disorganize the industry. We were certain that any form of amusement capable of attracting 20,000,000 patrons daily—as the government reports show—must be sound at heart, and strong enough to throw off the burden placed upon it by misguided opponents.

In an effort to gain a clear view into actual conditions — especially as they have to do with the writer of photoplays—the PHOTODRAMATIST recently sent out letters to each of the large studios, asking them for a candid opinion as to the motion picture outlook for 1922. Among the questions that we put to them were: "Do you think the year 1922 will be a 'big year,' or will it be a year of retrenchment and 'marking time'?" "Will there be an increase, or a decrease in production?" "Will you favor adaptations of published fiction, or do you plan to use photoplays written expressly for picture production?"

"On the whole, what, in your opinion, is the outlook for the sincere screen dramatist?"

The response has more than justified our hopes. Optimism is the keynote of every reply received. In fact, we have yet to hear from any producer who has anything but the highest confidence in the progress of motion picture art during the coming months. In many instances, studios will double their output. None of them intends to curtail production.

Even more gratifying is the underlying note of encouragement for the writer of original photoplays. Several of the large producers favor this form of motion picture story above any other; all of them heartily welcome the well-constructed film drama, written by those who have mastered the technique of the screen. In

short, they predict that this will undoubtedly be the greatest year that the well-grounded photoplay writer has ever known.

Space forbids the printing of the large number of opinions we have received. We believe, however, that the following, representative of the entire industry, will be of intense interest to our readers:

Ince Favors "Originals"

Editor, PHOTODRAMATIST,

I welcome your suggestion for an opinion from me as to the 1922 outlook for the Motion Picture screen.

Some time ago, I sent out an elaborate questionnaire, designed to draw out expert opinions on vital points of the industry. One of the questions read: "If the Motion Picture as an institution of entertainment and education were to crumble suddenly away, what is there today to take its place?" More than five hundred answers from editors and men of affairs from all over the world were received, and the answer to this question was unanimous—"Nothing."

This must be so, and facing this situation, producers, writers, players and distributors of motion pictures must put forth their greatest effort this year to hold the universal popularity of the Screen.

My faith in the coming year may best be shown by the productions I have now under way or in preparation. My production program for the year will include all feature productions and will number, during the year, more than I have ever produced in any two years.

The tendency of my Studios is toward the production of original stories with big themes and big dramatic action. I believe the tendency toward original screen structures will become stronger, for I am finding that, to produce the thing picture-goers want, we cannot find material in old or new fiction or in old or new plays. Each month sees the possibilities of the Screen increasing, and this alone precludes the possibility of waning popularity of the Screen.

THOS. H. INCE.

Vitagraph's Plans

Editor, PHOTODRAMATIST.

Vitagraph looks forward with absolute optimism to the production year of 1922. It is very evident that money is loosening, that people are becoming more inclined to invest in business ventures, and that depression is rapidly disappearing. Among the stories that Vitagraph will produce within the next few months will be "Magnificent Ambersons," by Booth Tarkington. Arrangements are being made for other productions on as large a scale. There should be a fine opportunity for anyone capable of presenting a really worthwhile story to the studios. No one is barred, providing the story material merits approval based upon consideration of box office receipts. Naturally stories by well known authors receive much consideration; but a good story is a good story, regardless of the author.

Very truly yours,
WM. S. SMITH,
General Manager, Pacific Coast Vitagraph Studios.

Lasky "Speeds Up"

Editor, PHOTODRAMATIST.

The Famous Players-Lasky Corporation has made pretentious plans for the year, which we believe will be the biggest in the history of the organization. It is our intention to make higher quality pictures than we ever have made before and to maintain a production schedule that will tax the capacity of our Hollywood plant, where we recently have installed many improvements to prepare for the busy months ahead. Among these improvements is the great glass-enclosed stage which has just been completed at the Lasky studio and which is the largest in the world.

In keeping with the policy which conditions have forced us to adopt, the most rigid economy will be practised in all production, eliminating all waste, high salaries, and unnecessary expenditures.

Paramount Pictures during the year will include many stories by the leading authors of the world, including Sir Gilbert Parker, Elinor Glyn, W. Somerset Maugham, Edward Knoblock, Sir James M. Barrie, Will Payne, Nina Wilcox Putnam, Samuel Merwin, George Ade, and many others.

We are not depending entirely on the reputation and published works of any author, however, but are willing to accept at any time originals, providing they have the merit to justify their production. I want to say that at the present time the demand for the sincere screen dramatist is greater than it has been at any previous time in the history of the motion picture industry.

CHARLES EYTON,
General Manager of West Coast Activities of Famous Players-Lasky Corporation.

Sees Prosperity Ahead

Editor, PHOTODRAMATIST,

An evidence of my personal viewpoint of what I think 1922 holds in store for the motion picture industry is probably best illustrated by my purchase, with a syndicate consisting of such men as Joseph M. Schenck, Louis J. Selznick, Myron Selznick, Allen Holubar, Jack Coogan, Watterson Rothacker, Joseph Aller, etc., of the controlling interest of the Robert Brunton Studios, Inc., the largest commercial studios in the world.

I cannot help but feel that 1922 will be a banner year for the independent producer, and, from present indications of the business we have signed up and that under negotiation, 1922 will find the independent producer in a very enviable position.

M. C. LEVEE,
President, United Studios, Inc.

Goldwyn Optimistic

Editor, PHOTODRAMATIST.

Indications point to an improvement in business conditions. Confidence is being restored and the great American public is gradually resuming its normal life.

Motion pictures are an essential part of our living. Knowing this to be true, we have no reason to fear lack of patronage, even if there are temporary fluctuations in the trade.

We have much to be thankful for in the lessons of the past, and the industry as a whole is profiting by them. Production has been placed on a reasonable basis.

Producers are learning that it is far better to make a few really fine pictures each year than to turn out a great number of mediocre ones. With the improvement in the quality of photoplays, the average life of pictures will increase proportionately.

The movement towards longer runs has been gradual, but none the less certain, and speaking for the Goldwyn Company, I may state that we are concentrating on the making of pictures which we believe will endure.

"The Old Nest" and "Dangerous Curves Ahead" are examples of what may be accomplished through the sheer merit of story and production without relying on the names of famous stars. Both of these pictures were beautifully acted, but the players were subordinated to the story, which is as it should be.

The optimism reflected through every branch of our organization is based on the knowledge that never in the history of the company have we entered on a new year with so many productions of outstanding merit complete and ready for distribution.

SAMUEL GOLDWYN.

"Story the Thing"--Universal

Editor, PHOTODRAMATIST.

Universal will not lose sight of Carl Laemmle's idea that every good production starts with a story.

Splendid stories by sincere writers last year resulted in such productions as "Reputation," "Conflict," "No Woman Knows" and fifty-two special attractions, released one a week, with a good story as the foundation of the success of each of them.

When Mr. Laemmle arrives in February he will set in motion a production schedule that will exceed Universal's record in the past. The biggest production of the coming season may be written by an amateur or an established writer; but it must be good.

The work of any sincere writer receives careful attention at Universal City. If the writer happens to have a reputation it may add to the box-office appeal of a story, but it does not influence its purchase unless it reaches the high standard required by Universal.

The industry is weathering the period of depression and good stories, sold at a price in ratio to their worth, will do much toward bringing back complete prosperity.

IRVING G. THALBERG,
Director-General of Universal City.

R-C Welcomes Trained Writer

Editor, PHOTODRAMATIST.

For the coming year, R-C Pictures Corporation extends a cordial welcome to trained writers of original stories. We believe that the day of the skilled photodramatist is at hand, and that the salvation of our industry lies in the development of writers familiar with their medium. While we are not interested in embryonic attempts of aspiring amateurs, we shall gladly welcome the products of authors who have the screen angle and who will endeavor to meet the needs of our three stars — Pauline Frederick, Sessue Hayakawa and Doris May. Two of Miss May's recent productions, "The Foolish Age" and "Gay and Devilish," as well as "The Lure of Jade," in which Miss Frederick recently appeared, were original stories, and we have under consideration a number of other originals for not only our stars but for special productions, which will be important features of our regular program. It will be our policy to follow as closely as circumstances permit the author's original conception of the story in transferring it to the screen, and in this we shall be only too glad to enlist their co-operation.

EVE UNSELL,
Scenario Editor, Robertson-Cole Studios.

First National Has Confidence

Editor, PHOTODRAMATIST,

At no time have I had greater confidence in the stability of our form of amusement. We have the natural offering for the great numbers of our people because the screen presents an amusement of the highest type, and yet one that can be offered at a price that will interest the bulk of our people.

I realize, of course, that there has been a depression, and I naturally feel that that depression will exist until the return of all industries to normalcy, whatever that expression may mean; but I do feel that we will suffer less and that we will get by, especially if we can count on the entire industry for pulling together for a common purpose, and that purpose the good of the industry as a whole.

Very truly yours,
ROBERT LIEBER,
President, Associated First National Pictures, Inc.

Coogan Seeks Photoplays

Editor, PHOTODRAMATIST.

I feel that the year 1922 is going to be a big year for big pictures. The producer must give the public silent drama productions that are worth while. The public has been educated thoroughly in the art of the motion picture, and I think that their money will enter box offices only where the highest class pictures are presented.

With reference to the Jackie Coogan Productions, I will say that there will be no let up whatever during 1922. Jackie Coogan is to make a series of feature pictures of the highest grade and his studio will enjoy one of the busiest of seasons.

To date Jackie Coogan has made but one picture adapted from book form, which was "Peck's Bad Boy," the others being original

stories. I am constantly seeking new and original story material for this little star, and I feel that you will agree with me that stories for Jackie Coogan are not to be found very easily.

I feel that the screen dramatist is fast coming into his own—that 1922 not only will be a big year for big pictures, but a banner year for the sincere writer for the silent drama.

With all good wishes to the PHOTODRAMATIST, I remain,

SOL LESSER,
President, Jackie Coogan Productions.

"Big Year" Says Christie

Editor, PHOTODRAMATIST.

This is going to be the year in which pictures will reign supreme. I mean by that that the period of extravagant theatre presentation, prologues, vaudeville, fol de rol and what-not on theatre programs is about over.

Picture shows are getting back to what they were primarily intended for—the presentation of a complete diversified bill of pictures—and pictures only.

This means that the short films, particularly the comedies, will make greater strides than ever from a point of view of high class in stories and production, so that they will hold their place as one of the features on the bill.

1922 will be a picture year, and I would rather furnish twenty-five minutes of the program in the best theatres everywhere than own all the vaudeville acts in the country.

AL E. CHRISTIE,
President, Christie Film Company.

Says "Story" Basis of Success

Editor, PHOTODRAMATIST,

My hopes for the ensuing year in our industry are most optimistic. In the case of the Robert Jackson Productions, our company has a quota of twelve motion pictures to produce within the next eight months. We are making these pictures because there is always a demand for clean, wholesome entertainment.

I believe that, under the readjustment plans of some of our larger distributing companies and associations, the entire industry will benefit, the independent as well as the affiliated producer will be renumerated more bountifully for a good product than he has hitherto; but he must stand ready to experience a loss if his production is mediocre or less.

In other words, the picture industry is to profit by this survival of the fittest; and the undesirables who, in the past, have not contributed to the uplift of our work shall perforce be eliminated from participating in one of the greatest educational forces of this present day.

Inasmuch as the story is recognized as the basis of all good photoplays, new ideas and treatment in stories, irrespective of the author's name, are particularly welcome. Our greatest dearth today is material which escapes the brand of triteness.

I look to the present year to yield a crop of pictures unsurpassed in artistry and quality of production; and we shall do our share in contributing toward that end.

JACKSON READE,
General Manager, Robert Jackson Productions.

The Screen Drama League

Definite plans for the organization and perpetuation of the Screen Drama League, as tentatively suggested by Alfred Hustwick, in a recent number of the Photodramatist are being formulated; and complete announcement of them will be made in the coming issue. Mr. Hustwick's article brought an immediate response from many readers, in all parts of the country, leaving no doubt as to the popularity of this movement to defend the screen against the evils of censorship.

Procrastination

By Sophie E. Redford

The photodramas in my mind
That I could write, if I would do it!
But when I do, alas! I find
Some other playwright's beat me to it.

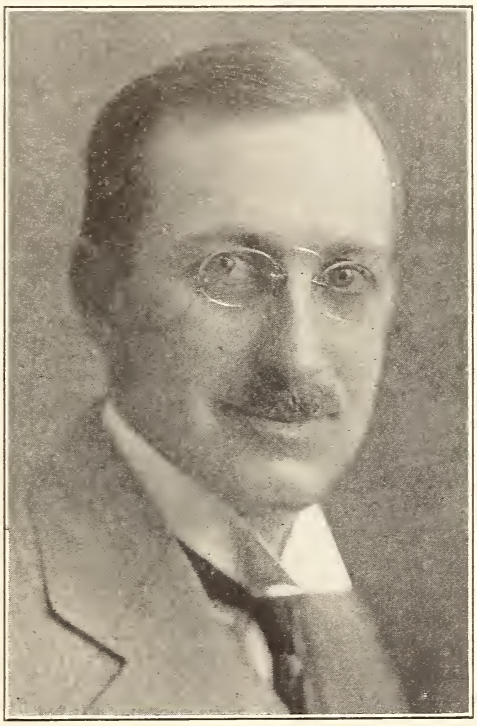
Chicago News Scenario Contest

Announcement of the winners of the Chicago Daily News scenario contest will be made on, or about, February 15th, according to advice received from that publication. The Photodramatist expects to be able to publish the names of the fortunate screen dramatists in the next issue.

"Action Is Keynote of Successful Play or Motion Picture"

By Richard Walton Tully

WHEN the author conceives a story the impression is purely mental; but once the story takes hold of him he must find means of expressing himself to others, and so the story is born in some particular shape. In the case of the artist, he may decide to use either drawings, paintings, sculpture or bas-relief. In former days the author, having conceived his story, had only two means of expressing himself — by the written word in a tale, or by the spoken word accompanied by action in a drama.



Millions of people throughout the world have been thrilled by Mr. Tully's powerful stage plays, "The Bird of Paradise," "Omar, the Tentmaker," and "The Masquerader." His views upon entering the motion picture world are, therefore, unusually timely and valuable to the screen writer.

The producer of a drama on the stage knows that two elements go to make up every play—dialogue and what is technically known as "business." It has long been a well known fact that plays which abound in action and "business" have been the most successful, and if joined to this the scenic effects of the particular play are spectacular or interesting, the whole is helped.

It has been my particular field to write and produce plays of pictorial value, i. e., in which the beauty of settings and abundance of action are predominant. Consequently, when I came to enter this, my first motion picture production, it occurred to me that I was entering not exactly a new field, but part of an old field.

Moving pictures present a story wholly through business — or action — shown upon the screen, in which are inserted words in the form of sub-titles, when necessary, to carry the plot of the story.

It has been my fortune to do my first work for the screen in conjunction with James Young, the veteran director and I have found that although the fundamentals of writing for the screen are as above stated, yet the art of scenario and continuity writing requires a technique of its own. This is due primarily to the peculiar divisions into which the story falls, and the conventions used by the screen instead of the curtain. Still, on the whole, the medium for the story is the same as that used upon the regular stage. However, the great advantage of the screen over the spoken stage lies in the annihilation of those two bugbears of the stage dramatists—time and distance. The whole world is thrown open to the screen writer and is at his disposal instantaneously — no "heavy sets," no "rushing stage hands," no "dark changes"—all the time in the world to visit scenes in different countries, secure manners and customs of the world, put them on a piece of celluloid and present them one after another continuously without a moment's loss of time. And

from this standpoint alone the present form of screen story will never be excelled. A moving story of adventure or externals reaches its highest phase here, since it combines all the fluidity of the novelist's art with the graphic representation of the stage. But on the other hand, where the screen story lacks is in devices to show the drama of the inner life or soul. On the stage, by means of words and tonal qualities, many effects of the psychological values of a story can be produced: this was more notable in the older dramas of the stage, which were written before modern realists insisted on cutting out the soliloquy. The screen has found one device which at present allows the equivalent of the old time soliloquy; I mean a dissolving insert to show what is passing in the mind of the character affected. From this oversufficient device alone, I think, some of the recent film stories have derived considerable punch in a subjective way. Let us hope that the eagle-eyed censor will not set forth to suppress this device as unnatural.

One may ask: "Why show the subjective on an objective screen?" I can only answer that I feel that no great art has ever existed in the world except that it was founded on a subjective state which, in contemplating, the beholder immediately identified with his own soul-feeling and thereby got the proper enjoyment or thrill. The joy of the epigram and verbal badinage so present in the plays of Wilde or Shaw cannot be shown with any relative value upon the screen, although recently I have noted in some of the larger theatres I have visited the real laughs coming from purely verbal matter, i. e., a "feed line" and an apt reply—and this without any situations leading up to the joke in point. It occurs to me that perhaps directors have been a little too reticent with their titles or screen witticisms in the past—perhaps because real witticisms that carried the necessary punch for a laugh are very few and far between and very hard to get.

The world is divided up into two classes of people: first, the positive people of action who do things and classify them afterwards, and secondly, those scholasticists who classify everything from the past and endeavor to build up achievements today by classification, pedagogy, and definition. For that reason I am inclined to believe that mere terms of screen writing have little to do with the actual making of a good story. The insertion of a close-up, per se, without relation to its value by any rule of thumb, I am sure would ruin, not help a story. In other words, the so-called invention of the close-up by an eminent director was nothing but the thought! Here the intense tang of a spectator's interest is so great he should see his character's face more clearly; and so, with the lens, a great director brought the face closer to the audience. This close-up was new, and yet it was a classification of a very well known established custom in the real theatre, that of placing opera glasses on the back of orchestra chairs within reach of the dime in the hands of an eager spectator who wished to see the actor's emotions more closely.

The elements of a good story, whether sung as an ole by Hawaiian natives to an accompaniment of calabashes and cocoanut rattles, or a story half-read, half acted a la Russe, fastened on celluloid and shot upon the screen or given upon the stage by living actors in the form of drama—their fundamental qualities are still the same: to make those who are watching the story, either through eye or ear, throb at its adventure, mourn with its catastrophe, sympathize with its hero or heroine to such an extent that they forget their place in the audience and live for a moment outside themselves in the land of make-believe which yet seems real. Some job at that!

As a newcomer to the arts of the screen I hope to work my way slowly. Whether I can achieve what I should like to do in this new field remains to be seen—but there are three rules of criticism that are fundamental to any artist's attempt in any field—first, what is the workman trying to do; second, has he done it; third, was it worth doing? Inasmuch as I am a tyro I hope I may be excused for stating what I feel may lie ahead of me in the land of the silver sheet, even in this rather indefinite fashion. And you will please observe that numbers two and three of the above criticism still remain to be answered.

The Guild Forum

A monthly department devoted to the interests of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America, the official organization of recognized photodramatists and studio staff writers.

By Alfred Hustwick

The Screen Writers' Guild

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Frank E. Woods, President.
June Mathis, Vice-President.
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Under Indictment

MOTION pictures, motion picture people, and the motion picture art stand at the bar of public opinion. The list of their alleged crimes is formidable and includes everything from the corruption of innocence to the perversion of the public taste in Art—with a capital "A." Long-haired reformers, short-sighted authors, and political opportunists are prosecuting the case with venomous vigor—and with a total disregard of the principles of fair play. Yellow journals and pink periodicals report the progress of the case in their usual manner, instructing their paid prevaricators to play up the alleged wickedness of the accused in the most sensational fashion. Throughout the length and breadth of the land, a monstrous fiction is growing up—a belief that the defendants are not only guilty, but are proud of their sins. And because the defense has been entrusted to divided counsels, because the motion picture people have tried to laugh the case out of court, public opinion is developing signs of irritation, and, what is worse, hostility. Consequently, the so-called reformers who yammer for censorship and Blue Sundays are encouraged to persists in their campaign of denunciation, prohibition, and corruption.

Costly Indifference

The motion picture, because of its universal appeal, is easily the most popular topic, and therefore the most salable "news," in the whole of Christendom. Witness the tremendous publicity accorded to screen people and their activities by the press, by the horde of "fan" magazines, by scores of little viperish periodicals of parasitical character which batten on the public interest in "movie dirt." That "fierce light which beats upon a throne" is a feeble candle compared to the huge "sun-arc" of "pitiless" (and mostly piffling) publicity which beats upon motion pictures and the people who make them. Nothing in history has received such a tremendous reception from the people of this planet, from Baltimore to Borneo, from Seattle to Zanzibar, as the screen drama. And the people who have exploited this unprecedented and unflagging interest have invested the "movies" with a glamour all their own. In this they have been aided and abetted by many motion picture publicists who have confused their aims and stooped to a sordid sensationalism that has merely drawn attention to the more startling features of the thing they advertised without gaining public approval or sympathy. Occasionally some far-sighted motion picture man has issued a warning that injury to the screen and its people would result from this policy of good-naturedly wearing the mask of wickedness because Lizzie and Jake get a thrill out of it. But screen people generally have enjoyed this "joke" about their devilishness and have only laughed at the caricature of their work and their morals which the sensation-mongers have peddled as a true picture.

A Job for the Guild

Well, the time has come to cease trying to laugh the case out of court. Getting down to facts, it isn't really a laughing matter that Centreville and Podunk regard Hollywood as a nest of iniquity peopled by an ungodly bunch of Bacchanalians who weep because there are only ten commandments to be broken. It *was* funny, so long as it was only believed by a few long-haired gentlemen and a few short-haired ladies. But today, thanks to the zeal of the reformers, the pandering of the press and periodicals, and our own foolish indifference, the motion picture is

assailed from every quarter, and the people who make them are universally condemned as Hedonists whose excesses would have shocked the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

There is a big job ahead of the industry and the longer we wait the harder it will be to successfully accomplish it. The world must be convinced that the people of the motion pictures are ordinary human beings, neither better nor worse than the people who follow any other occupation. The public must be taught to distinguish between the true motion picture workers and the parasites who, with the connivance of the press, claim a connection with the "movies" simply for the advertising they may thus receive. Hollywood, the real home of the industry, must be painted in its true colors, as a quiet, homelike city of hard-working people, absolutely devoid of that wild "night-life" which the tourist has been taught to expect and never can discover. Unless Podunk and Centreville can be convinced that the people who write, direct, and otherwise assist in the production of the motion picture are decent, law-abiding people with decent aims and ideals, the motion picture will find its way growing increasingly difficult, and the motion picture art will be stultified.

Because the Guild represents the articulate branch of the industry it should lead in this work. A broadside of truth from the "big guns" of the literary world who are to be found on its list of members, will do much to correct the present day evil of misrepresentation.

"Panning" and Pandering

In passing, it should be noted that attacks upon the motion picture people have been such good "material" that even one or two "fan" magazines have not hesitated to bite the hand that feeds them and turn themselves, for the sake of circulation, into "pan" magazines. The insincerity of this particular form of pandering is proved by their selection of writers who are personally prejudiced against motion pictures, to report "the truth about the movies." Writers with some following are now able to get back at the people who dared to return their attempts at screen-writing, and, best of all, to get paid for their venomous "criticism" —the more venom, the more pay. "Highbrows" who envy the hard-won success of professional photodramatists, can make a few dishonest dollars ridiculing an art that has proved too complex for them to master.

And Theodore Dreiser, whose novels have been freely criticised and, in some instances suppressed, because of their alleged immoral tone, can get a job to report on the morals of the "movies"— which is something like hiring the ex-kaiser to report on "who started the war."

The Guild has members whose pens command the respect of the public, the press, and the publishers. Let us have the real truth about motion pictures and the motion picture people. The cold light of Truth won't reveal us as a tribe of superior things, but, compared with any other profession, we can stand the most searching "close-up."

By Way of Explanation

The editor of this department feels that a word or two of explanation is due to Guild members regarding the "write-up" of The Script—which is the breezy weekly house organ of the Guild and its club, brightly-written and ably edited by Jack Cunningham—in the January issue.

The Script is a very interesting periodical and one of its best features is the "country weekly" style adopted by Editor Cunningham who, in his role of bucolic scribe is able to treat of Guild and club happenings in an intimate and amusing manner. The editor of this department thought it would be a good "boost" for the new paper and something of a joke if he imitated Mr. Cunningham's style in acknowledging The Script's appearance. So he wrote what he thought was a humorous "notice" and showed it to Mr. Cunningham before publication. It was appreciated in that quarter and sent to the printer.

But—some zealous proof-reader, with a keen sense of duty and no sense of humor, became worried over the fact that the article contained a few typographical errors. These errors, needless to say, were intentional and occurred in a paragraph "roasting" the proof-reader of The Script for his "carelessness." Mr. Proof-reader faithfully corrected the typographical errors; then he thought the English was a little below the standard of the magazine, so corrected that, as far as he could. When he got through tinkering with the humorous little "write-up" he had carefully edited out the humor and evolved a

(*Continued on Page 38*)

Where Are We Now?

By Kathleen Norris

YOU can remember—if like myself you have reached what has been erroneously described as the "splendid, idle forties"—but nobody in filmdom has, as yet, now that I stop to think about it—anyway, your mothers can remember that years ago we had a patent medicine craze. Everybody took "nostrums," "cure-alls" and "pain-killers." Large black bottles stood above the sink in every well-regulated kitchen, and every member of the family, old or young, was dosed from the same bottle for everything from colic to fatty degeneration of the heart. The labels on these bottles were fascinating to an imaginative child; they mentioned rheumatism, kidney trouble, boils, rashes, burns and bruises, headaches, sore feet, tiredness, sleeplessness, and even—sometimes — pink-eye and bog-spavin and heaves.



Few American writers are as well known or better loved by the public than Kathleen Norris. Her views on the photo-drama, whether you agree with her or not, are certain to be of interest.

Then a few years later we had another phase. We demanded the same quality in our literature. Archibald Clavering Gunther sold his hundreds of thousands, "Duchess" flourished apace, and every well-regulated little boy, and at least one little girl, spent their nickels on "Nick Carter." O beloved Nick Carter—whose memory to me is indissolubly associated with the smell of old leather in the harness loft where I followed his forbidden trail! Oh, trap-doors, secret passages, moats, revolvers, codes and ciphers, spies and mysteries! A page from Nick Carter went something in this fashion:

"Nick looked about.

"Blackness was everywhere.

"He suspected dirty work from Chinese Joe.

"Bang — bang!"

"It was a revolver.

"'Take that—d—n you!"

"Fingers clutched his throat.

"He felt himself falling.

"He heard a woman's ugly laugh."

And so on, through miles of flimsy, greyish, badly-printed, badly-constructed, badly-phrased, badly-planned adventures, always to end upon maddening words to the effect that Nick's triumphant escape from the Chinese Bandits' Secret Culvert would be published next week.

Harmful? I don't know that they were. I don't know a successful male writer in America today who did not gulp down large doses of Nick, in the early nineties. And certainly our forefathers, the generation that gave us Lincoln, and Grant, and Edison and Roosevelt and Henry Ford and Buffalo Bill, gulped down in its turn the pain-killers and the cure-alls. We like thrills, we Americans, and now that the

Indians and the border wars and the witch-burning and slave-riots are over, we take them in smaller quantities from bottles and books——

Yes, and from films. Because certainly the moving pictures are just at that point now. They must serve us danger, and so motor-cars fall off bridges and roofs give way, and rivers carry whole villages off in their flood. They must serve us passion, red-hot, not merely expressed by agitated countenances and subtle fears, but attended royally with pistols, knives, poison, treachery and hate. They must serve us love—and although the whole house boos sentimentally when lips meet lips in that long, last fade-away kiss, yet —up to that instant—the more love the better.

So the moving picture has to follow an exact pattern; so much doubt, so much danger, so much hate and so much love, and no matter how exquisite are the elements that must be cut out to make room for the pattern, they are sacrificed in all the studios over and over again, because the public must be pleased. Wonderful studies of childhood, of tender old age, and—to my own knowledge —at least one whole film that was devoted to a beautiful and marvelously handled picture of adolescent youth; these are all "scrapped" to make way for the old situation. The girl, the man she marries, the man she comes to love—or the man, the woman he marries, the money trouble, shots of the office and the altered ledger or the empty safe; rapid adjustments, and then the fade-out kiss again.

Will it go on this way? Can it go on this way? Must we not have a greater variety; less thrill, less speed, more leisurely development of the infinitesimal things that make life hard or easy, or sweet or sad, for most of us, and that remain in our hearts long after the accidents and the revolvers are forgotten? Isn't the public some day going to tire of candy and sodas, and ask for wholesome bread and butter and apple-pie?

How should I know? Nobody knows. And meanwhile some producers go on patiently and in discouragement, giving the world the finer thing, and other producers triumphantly quote their box-offices when they have given instead the absurdities, the suggestive unpleasantnesses, the inflaming hints that American youth everywhere drinks in for truth, and that are the real cause of the sudden, nation-wide tendency to criticize and blame the motion pictures.

But the pictures are really no more to blame than the homes, than the schoolhouses. There is such a thing as fineness; as coming to love the truer, simpler thing. But where are our children going to find it? When the children, and Mother and Dad, and Aunt Mary and Grandpa wake up, someday, and announce that they are going to discriminate a little in the future, and seriously analyze the claims of the different producers, and steadfastly patronize only those who show some little conscientiousness in what they give the public, then—

But that will be about the year 1985 or 1986.



An oft-times worthy theme will fall flat unless it is conveyed convincingly. If you have a good foundation, build carefully thereon. An idea, in itself, will not sell a photoplay.



The law requires that a doctor study five years before entering his profession; a lawyer, four; a teacher, four. Why, then, think to win success as a photoplay writer without equally diligent preparation?



Don't look for eggs this year in last year's nest. The theme and plot of last year's screen success is the one you should especially avoid.

The Trend of Production

Successful Photoplay of the Future Must Reflect Real Life

By Joseph Franklin Poland

SOME years ago, when the motion picture was deeper in the infancy it has not been allowed to outgrow, it was maintained that the sole province of the screen was physical action. Let the screen stick to melodrama, said the critics with lofty foreheads, and the stage will convey ideas. Since then, the flashing satires of Cecil de Mille, Tucker's "Miracle Man," "Humoresque," "Over the Hill," and "The Old Nest" have blazed new paths, proving that the photoplay and rank melodrama are not irrevocably wed. And that brings us to the present trend of production.

Motion picture production has passed through many phases, but the present phase is the finest and most hopeful. Why? Because the dominant screen story of today reflects life as we live it. It deals not with the simperings of vacuous ingenues tossed into artificial situations, nor with the portrayal of mere physical action whose only reason for being is that "it moves;" but with flesh-and-blood characters whose daily lives, while containing vitally interesting problems, are no more filled with murder, bloodshed or mystery than are our own.



Joseph Franklin Poland has climbed to fame by the sheer merit of his original photoplays. His opinions on producers and their requirements are authoritative and worth careful study.

Stories of this kind need fall into no rut. They need not be classified as Mother—or Married Life—stories except by the near-sighted. Since they are stories of life as we live it, life itself offers an inexhaustible field of material. Note that word *inexhaustible*; it is just as true as that time and space are infinite. Melodramatic devices can be depleted; after you have blown up bridges, ships and buildings, wrecked trains, ships and airplanes, and had ice and log jams, you shuffle them up, vary the formula, and repeat. But the possibilities of your story based on real human beings are as unlimited as time and space—and life. My persistence in making the printer set up that word *life* may be annoying to him, but it is important to you. We are living, this is life—so what is more vital, in a story or elsewhere? Well, as there is nothing else more vital, it is a shame to put anything else into your story!

Now, I hope no one will judge, from the above, that I advise writing a story faithfully mirroring, for example, the daily routine of Mrs. Murphy, the washwoman, or Jim Brown, the bookkeeper, with all the deadly-dull details of their uneventful lives. Allah forbid! Either of this well known pair, or both, if we select them as characters, should be found at a period of their existence that is eventful, when a crisis impends or a tragedy threatens.

The choosing of characters from life is no reason for throwing overboard the principles of dramatic writing. A screen story should be dramatic, and we must have conflict and clash of will and complications. Our daily life is a struggle, and as we win or lose it is written our success or our failure.

"But when you say tragedy, crisis and complications," someone will ask, "aren't you inconsistently advocating the very melodramatic devices you rant against?"

Emphatically, no. Given enough interest in Brown, the clerk, and his family, the theft ,of his needed pay-envelope with its consequences, can be made as great a tragedy as any event ever chronicled. Compress that pathos and comedy of our washwoman's life within dramatic bounds; interest us in her neighbors, her shiftless husband, and her children growing up in the tenement atmosphere; then, if she falls from the roof while hanging clothes, on a night when her factory-employed daughter needs her most, we have a poignant crisis that far transcends a train-wreck.

Nothing touches us so deeply as sincerity of treatment, fidelity in depicting the tear and the smile that lurks in the common-place. Nothing leaves us so cold as the empty photoplay of physical action whose characters rush madly hither and yon, interrupted only by florid or hectic sub-titles. But, while deprecating melodrama for melodrama's sake, I do not condemn it as a means to an end. Properly handled, it will always have its place on the screen. If our clerk or our saleswoman, depicted faithfully, are placed in such circumstances that the logical consequences turn out to be melodramatic, we have melodrama in its highest form—linked to life, to human beings, and therefore possessing a soul. It invariably makes a happy combination.

A study, not alone of the current photoplays, but of the stage, is interesting at the present time. Three of the greatest Broadway successes herald the new order of stories. "Lightnin'" is a character study, with an utter absence of melodrama. "The First Year" is woven about the domestic trials of a young couple. "A Six-Cylinder Courtship" is, elementally, the story of a car that was so expensive to maintain that it bankrupted two families. Fiction has been responding to a similar impetus. Have you read "Miss Lulu Bett" or "Main Street?" The coin of the realm that all these are gathering is a crushing answer to those who think that the public craves only the sensational or the rapidly-moving story. In addition to its money-making qualities, the producer is learning that the true-to-life story, with its human touches and intimate details, is not only a finer product than the spectacular "dud," but costs far less to produce. Prove your point to the producer through the box-office and his pocketbook, and you convince him thoroughly.

The original writer should hail this new trend of production with sincere pleasure. It is his real opportunity. He doesn't have to rack his brains to think of new ways of blowing up ships or wrecking trains. He is living in a great day and age, and on all sides of him surges life, waiting to be interpreted in terms of the photoplay. He need have no lurking fear of "writing himself out" with this infinitude of material at hand.

Life offers the story material; you furnish pen, paper and ink—and that one unmaterial thing, Imagination. The stories wait to be written. Seize your pen, brother, and let's go! And may the best writer win.



Let the beginner in screen writing forego worrying over his Art, and concern himself with writing of Life. Life begets Art. Those who worry too much over the mould in which to cast their dreams are putting the cart before the horse.



Propaganda has no place on the screen. If you wish to condemn a race, a creed or a class, publish pamphlets. The first duty of the photoplay is to entertain.

"Write Them So That They Will Produce Them"

By Clyde Westover



Clyde Westover

WRITE them so that they will produce them. Your story is the lot that the producer builds his house on, and just like real estate, he won't buy your story unless he is convinced that it will be a profitable investment. Try to offer him a screen vehicle that, without detriment to the story, will be within the bounds of sane and reasonable production cost. Enormous spectacular productions, with the pomp and panoply of costumed mobs, the expensive architectural construction of "period" sets, the great length of time consumed in production, the vast corps of experts and assistants, and the infinite research and detail that is necessary, are risky ventures at best, and Mr. Producer fights shy of them unless he has some sure-fire literary or dramatic success to take them from and feels secure that he is going to get his money back on the name alone, before he starts.

Avoid artificiality, which is always expensive. Strive to write simple, natural stories full of the varieties of the life that is around you, for the producer knows that it is easier and cheaper to produce such stories and that ninety per cent of the screen audiences, and therefore one hundred per cent of the exhibitors prefer them to all the "Falls of Ancient Byzantium" or to the story of the artful Roman matron who dodges in and out through six reels, constantly deserting her expensively costumed retainers and her pilastered palace to double-expose herself as herself and her Christian counterpart of twenty-five hundred years later.

It's the heart-throb that they want, for the heart-throb is mighty good business. What does the tear-mist mean—the tear-mist that clouds your eyes in that mother-love story? It means money in the producer's pocket. Good actors in a good story of that kind and good direction are about all he needs. He doesn't have to build a lot of expensive sets and hire a raging mob to plug over a story that plays on the heart strings.

Commercialize your art to the extent, at least, of showing the producer that you are considerate of his end of the game, and you will get consideration from him. If you write a corking good story, presented sequentially so that he can follow it readily and visualize plot situations and settings, and, if he likes it, can realize at the same time that the story can be filmed at a fairly moderate price, it doesn't matter whether your name is Bill Jones or Sam Splivins—you've got a mighty good chance to sell it.

Is it presumptuous to couple the word "commercialism" with "literary art? Screen stories are valuable as commercial assets to the producers who buy them, and they are certainly judged from commercial, as well as literary, standpoints. Suppose we just touch at random upon one angle—the angle of retakes. A story that hops about all over the globe and requires various atmospheric sets with their attendant mobs may prove very expensive in the matter of re-takes if numbers of people have to be held over, even for a day, while scenes are shot over again. But a story that is a real story and doesn't need anything but an average cast of capable people to put it across is not liable to bring much expense in re-takes. Why not write that kind?

Do not write the bizarre, the neurotic, the sordid, the extreme. They're too expensive—principally to yourself, because they're mighty hard to sell, expensive from the production end because they won't appeal to the healthy American audience.

Strive, rather, for novelty and originality.

You are an average human being. So is the producer, so is the exhibitor, so is the fellow that pays to see the picture. Just imagine the three of them as one composite average human being like yourself and write for him. That's commercial sense. That fellow that you will write for

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THE "FOURTH DIMENSION" IN THE ART OF MOTION PICTURE PRODUCTION

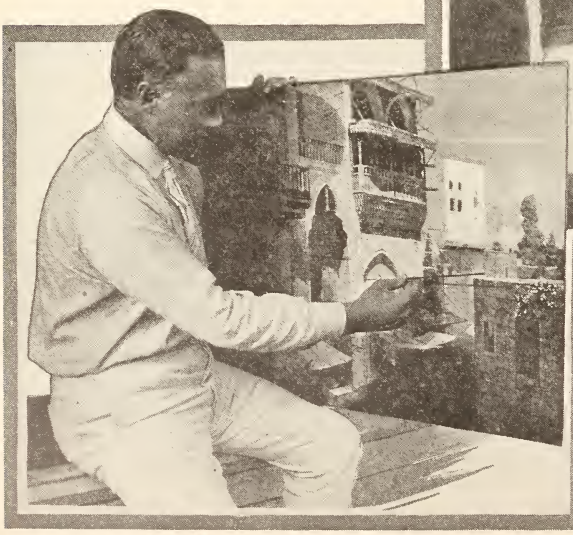


Here are three typical scenes from "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," as designed and filmed by Ferdinand Earle, the artist.



The people you see are real, but the "settings" are merely small paintings—unbelievable as it may seem.





Ferdinand Earle (left) at work on one of his "sets." In the completed picture the actors lean from the balcony and walk through the doorway shown in the painting.

New Production Process May Prove Boon To Screen Dramatist

By Willard Huntington Wright

THERE is one man in the motion picture industry of whom as yet the world has heard but little. However, when the true annals of the cinema have been penned by some honest and perspicacious Ferrero, this man will be the Bismarck—or, in view of certain recent hostilities, the Gladstone—of the animated picture industry. Perhaps we should call him the Columbus, for he is primarily a discoverer who has taken quite as perilous a trip into the unknown seas of animated photography as the old Italian navigator took across the uncharted Atlantic.

But even this appellation does not cover the field, for the man of whom I am writing is more than a discoverer. He has something of Caesar in him also, for he has had to fight his way to victory over what would have appeared to a man of lesser courage, insurmountable obstacles. And even to speak of him metaphorically as a great general of cinematography is to ignore what is perhaps the most important phase of his work—namely: his art capabilities. The man, in fact, is a sort of modern Leonardo da Vinci of the motion picture craft—a fighter, an inventor, a pathfinder, and an artist.

His name is Ferdinand Earle, and unless the laws of logic are suddenly abrogated and the processes of evolution come to a standstill, he is the man who, in a very short time, will completely revolutionize the whole cumbersome and expensive process by which motion pictures are at present produced. I say he "will" revolutionize it, putting in the future tense, not because his work is as yet experimental, but because the mind of man is so constituted that it requires considerable time for iconoclastic ideas, no matter how valid and practicable, to take root. The fact is that Mr. Earle has already evolved, perfected and set into action a method of motion picture production which has made almost limitless the possibilities of the cinema.

The technical side of motion pictures has developed by leaps and bounds. The machinery of the films has been brought to a point approximating perfection. All manner of devices, like "dissolving shutter fade-outs," "floating irises" and "gauze and barn-door vignettes," "soft focus lenses," have been discovered and utilized. But the directors and their scouts still seek for appropriate "locations" or call upon the carpenters, plasterers and interior decorators for settings in which to enact the drama of the script. When extensive snow-scenes are wanted the actors are taken into actual snow-drifts: and when numerous tropical settings are required the actors are packed off to the tropics. Even when this is not done both snow-scenes and tropical scenes are designed and fabricated at enormous expense on the studio lot. And when an ancient setting is imperative, architects and builders must reproduce ancient scenes very much as the temples and grounds of the World's Fair were produced.

Obviously such a method is burdensome, time-taking and expensive, and only a certain number of such "sets" can be afforded for a picture.

Now Mr. Earle has struck at the very underlying principles of the present procedure of production. He has developed a method which, instead of beginning at the top and working downward, begins at the very bottom and evolves upward.

The Author of This

article is one of the most famous art critics in the world. His views on this revolutionary process of motion picture production are bound to interest photoplay writers, to whom, if Mr. Wright's predictions prove correct, it will open a vast new field of expression.

He has brought about a veritable **auto da fe** of the producing end of the cinema industry. He has made the extensive and elaborate studios of today and yesterday unnecessary. He has rendered it possible to produce any picture laid in any place and at any time without once leaving the studio grounds. He has done away with the necessity of a great corps of carpenters, electricians, designers, plasterers, paper-hangers, stage-hands and all the other innumerable workers whose labor is now necessary to the producing of a motion picture drama.

And not only has he brought about these far-reaching changes in the practical side of cinematography, but he has made possible the presentation of pictorial spectacles in films such as have never been even so much as attempted heretofore because of the colossal practical obstacles and the prohibitive expense attached to their undertaking. Had Mr. Earle merely accomplished his simplification without lowering the present standard of motion pictures he would have performed a work of sufficient significance and importance to have emblazoned his name on the entire future history of the industry. But his real worth and importance lies in the fact that he has opened up a vista of possibilities along the line of pictorial improvement the end of which the human eye cannot at present see. For the same amount of money that is now spent on an ordinary five-reel feature drama, Mr. Earle by his new process can produce a picture which is not only infinitely more beautiful, more varied, more interesting, more compact, more dramatic, more spectacular and more gorgeous than the pictures produced by the present methods, but which would be impossible of production under these present methods at any cost whatever.

The technical details of Mr. Earle's process need not occupy us here; but the process itself is so simple that it can be stated in a very few words. It is simply this: Mr. Earle can paint on a small canvas any setting he desires, whether interior or exterior, whether in dim twilight or in glaring sunshine, whether a "close-up" or a "long-shot"; and into this picture, by a complicated method of double exposures and reductions, he can introduce the living figures of real people who walk up and down the painted streets, enter and emerge from the painted houses, scale the painted mountains, descend into the painted valleys, wander through the painted gardens, fight upon the painted battlefields, move about the painted rooms, and make love beneath the painted cypresses and beside the painted pools.

When this picture is projected the full size of the theatre screen it is just as real in appearance as if it were an actual scene from nature or the photograph of an actual interior. And so cleverly and convincingly is the action of the people introduced into it that it requires a somewhat credulous imagination to accept the statement that the actors are not moving in pantomime in actual settings. For the action does not take place on one plane. You can see them in the distance, diminished by perspective, walking toward you down the painted streets, becoming larger and larger in exact mathematical proportion according to the laws of optics and relativity. You can see them on distant hilltops, mere human specks against the horizon, and at the same time you can see others, life-size, wandering about the flower-beds of the garden in the immediate foreground. It is all a perfect illusion, and should any actual setting, photographed from nature, be alternated with the painted sets, you could not tell which was the reality and which the makebelieve—that is, provided that Mr. Earle did not make his paintings any more beautiful than actual scenes in nature.

And here enters an important point. By Mr. Earle's process it is possible to make a painted set appear as real as an actual set, but at the same time it is possible to give that painted set a beauty and a romance and a compositional form such as one cannot find haphazardly either in nature or in the houses built of wood and stone; for Mr. Earle can soften his shadows until his interiors are like Rembrandt's paintings and he can give his exteriors that misty, crepuscular effect such as we find in the nocturnes of Whistler. Moreover, he can revive, in all their splendor, the buried cities of the past; he can make blossom again the sunken gardens of the Orient; he can construct magical marble cities of semi-fabulous splendor; and he can reembody for us the stupendous and prodigal palace rooms of Harroun-el-Raschid.

Where Do You Get Your Ideas?

Several Methods of Corralling the Elusive "Plot Germ" Are Given in This Interesting Article

By Earl C. McCain

OF all the problems that confront the photodramatist probably the most difficult and the one on which success depends most is that of discovering sufficiently strong and novel ideas on which to build plays. While one success may not make a playwright, we all know that the development of one powerful, strikingly different idea often means the difference between printed rejection slips and countersigned checks, where future stories merit a close decision.

Suspense, characterization, unity, cleverness, emotional appeal and other elements that enter into the development of a story may be gained by study and practice, but after all, only those plays that contain big, original basic ideas are ever rated as really great. I recall no better examples of this than "The Miracle Man" and "Something to Think About."

Much has been written on this subject, and much of it seems to be good advice, but the point I want to make is that there seems to be no definite field to which the playwright may turn for a new idea, as he turns to a certain merchant when he wants a new pair of shoes.

One authority advises the close study of newspaper incidents, pointing out that some of the best photoplays are built on actual happenings. Another, equally prominent, favors careful study of successful plays, since one successful idea often inspires another, similar in theme. I know one critic who contends that the strongest development can only be obtained by first taking an abstract theme and building characters, plot, and everything else about it as a carpenter builds a house.

Still others believe that the best method of obtaining really strong ideas is by a close study of human nature, backing this belief with the assertion that to be great, a play must protray some great, sympathetic emotion that will instantly touch a responsive chord in the heart of the spectator, and by its realism, hold his interest.

Undoubtedly, each of those methods has merit, but to me, there seems to be no specific recipe for the finding of plot ideas. I think that no single method is broad enough in scope to supply the average scenarist with sufficient plot material. And in the course of my work, I have tried every one of those methods.

I went back the third time to see "Humoresque" and "Heliotrope," because both of them vividly brought out the theme of sacrifice through paternal love. And while studying them, I suddenly awoke to the realization that I was subconsciously developing another story on the same theme, though from an entirely different angle.

I made several return trips to see Wallace Reid in "Too Much Speed" because I recognized in it a master text-book for a struggling writer.

In the course of my ordinary newspaper work, I have an excellent opportunity to study people—from distinguished visitors to prisoners in police court—and from most of them, I learn something. Sometimes, the pitiful, comical, or merely interesting predicament of some prisoner leads me to devise means of getting purely imaginary characters into such a predicament, in order that it may serve as a climax to show the folly of some careless or wrathful act.

In others, the actual happening only serves as an opening situation from which a story may be developed outward. In still others, the occurrence suggests nothing, but one of the participants shows a character trait that does suggest a story.

I remember one case in which a man and his wife were in court, the man being

No Infallible Recipe

for obtaining photoplay plot ideas has yet been formulated. The wide-awake student of screen drama, however, can gain inspiration from a number of sources. Some of these are enumerated in the accompanying article. You may know of others. If so, the editor of Photodramatist would like to have them.

charged with creating a disturbance. From the evidence, it appeared that the woman had called the man a coward, and he, in turn, had demonstrated his physical prowess by giving her a thrashing.

The judge fined the man for beating his wife, and then, when she seemed determined to convince everyone in the room of her husband's weakness, the judge pointed out how much better it would have been had she concealed that weakness from the world and tried to help him overcome it. To me, that suggested two possible stories—one based on the actual case, and comical in tone, and another better one in which a woman, aware of her husband's weakness, did find a way to make him prove a hero in spite of his failing.

Some of the very best plays may result from a close study of people we meet in every day life. On one occasion, I was impressed by the sad appearance of an unusually attractive girl who worked in a cafeteria, but in spite of my efforts, I could not get her to talk to me. In the course of time, I learned that her grief was due to the fact that her husband was in the penitentiary, and from that point, the bringing in of an imaginary governor and the solution of a story built around that girl's loyalty, was comparatively easy.

Another story resulted from looking at a reproduction of the picture, "The Angelus." The fact that, no matter what those people were doing, they stopped and stood with bowed heads while the Angelus rang, gave me the idea for a story in which that few minutes of inactivity solved an apparently hopeless problem.

Often the merest incidents, provided they bring out real emotion, suggest excellent photoplay ideas. The joy of a mother when a busy son unexpectedly remembers her with a bouquet of flowers, the pride of a father in a child's accomplishments, and the plight of the human derelict who drags himself into the rescue mission and finds food and kind treatment when hope has flown, all contain possibilities.

Even the court house, grim and foreboding as it may appear from the outside, shelters a wealth of ideas, because the cases heard there represent the problems of every day life. And not all of them are dismal in tone, either. The divorce court, for instance, when the little differences of married life are magnified and aired, suggest material for good comedy to all those present except the principals in the case. And the marriage license bureau is another place worthy a visit any time.

There is no question but that the newspapers do contain many good ideas for photoplays. The motive back of a suicide or death, the remorse over the carelessness of an accident, the efforts of someone to help another, or the business problems that result in news are all of value provided the writer's imagination can carry him back of the news feature to what may have caused it.

The syndicate stuff on the woman's page often contains excellent basic ideas for human interest stories, a bit of advertising may suggest a business play, while even the stock reports have possibilities. And could any writer ask for stronger abstract themes than are offered in the terse, meaningful quotations of famous writers and statesmen that so many newspapers now carry?

After all, there seems to be an unlimited field from which to draw ideas, no matter which way we turn. The only thing necessary is that the photoplaywright shall constantly live with an open mind, on the alert to recognize and seize upon any idea that is presented to him—no matter from what source.

NOTHING can be more beneficial to the student of screen drama than a close study of the synopses of the various motion picture plays as given in the reliable trade journals. Such study will help to teach one the fundamentals of plot structure, as well as to keep the writer from using hackneyed situations. It is important, however, to bear in mind that it does not pay to let what has been done restrict one's imagination until he or she loses originality.

Balanced Characterization Vital to Photoplay, is Advice

of Mary Huntress

Frequently, with a pronounced air of originality, someone remarks that "no one in this world is independent, we are all dependent upon one another in everything we do." The remark, unfortunately trite and bromidic, is equally unfortunately true. If we were not dependent, if we could stand alone, there would be no one on whom we could blame our failures and as to our successes—no one could take the credit but ourselves.

This theory of interdependence is nowhere more clearly exemplified than in the cinema art. For in this work, more, perhaps than in any other, the efforts of one person may mar the product of an entire organization. The tedious hours of unrelenting plodding on the part of hundreds of people may be set at nought by the thoughtless act of an individual, player or writer. And thus it is that actor and author rise to the pinnacle of success, or fall 'mid the cries of ridicule to oblivion—and they rise or fall together.



Although she is not a so-called "Popular Star," Miss Huntress is one of the really sincere actresses in motion pictures. Her advice to screen writers strikes us as being unusually sound and helpful. What do you think?

The work of player or writer is co-ordinated more closely than any other two professions. In fact, so welded are these two callings that in a motion picture play, the failure of either principal brings failure to the other and, tragically, the success of one not only fails to lift the other but often goes unnoticed. So must it be said again that player and writer rise or fall together.

Writing as a player, I, perhaps, look with prejudiced eyes upon the screen failures and blame too many of them upon the authors. But, too, I have talked to writers who blame the actors for a crash of a piece that the author felt confident would succeed if properly acted. So with each blaming the other, who can say who is to blame?

To say that either author or player is not conscientious in his efforts is, perhaps, unjust. But after some thought, perhaps this is the trouble. If a player receives a script in which there is a character that to him seems inconsistent, he is very apt not to put his whole soul into the portrayal of that character. Either that, or else he revamps the part to suit his own needs and opinions and the writer suffers a relapse because he believes his product has been ruined by the change.

One of the greatest faults to be found with submitted scripts is that they deal almost solely with one person. That is, while they have other characters in them, they are written around the lead role and the incidental characters are treated as incidents. Whether the writer believes that only the main players are carefully scrutinized, I do not know. But I do know that the so-called unimportant roles are as full of pos-

sibilities for the picture's success as are the leads. For the viewing public does not consider the work of a single individual in considering a picture's merits but they consider the work as a whole and judge it accordingly.

An author must have respect for every character in his scenario. He must be as painstaking in his creation of the maid who removes the tea things in the middle of the fifth reel as he is of the baby-faced blonde who is rescued by the dark eyed hero. And unless a writer can see every character as an integral part of his story, then he has no perspective and he should quit writing or correct that viewpoint.

In reading submitted manuscripts I have found that many amateur writers shirk their responsibility and attempt to leave the portrayal of characters entirely to the actor. It is true that our business is to construct living men and women from the typed page, but the author must have in mind the character he wants and be capable of describing him before we can intelligently create the author's conception.

After a writer has molded his characters, he should take each one separately and go with him through the entire action. He should see that his character is consistent in every move and that nothing occurs in the last foot that does not harmonize with the action of the first.

After he has seen that the action of the individual character is sequacious, the author should then compare his characters and see whether they are properly balanced and, most important, whether they "synchronize." By that I mean that, other than the contrast that must be shown between characters, the various roles should, like the cogs of a wheel, come into mesh and fit exactly. One character should not antagonize another. Neither should there be parallels, for it is a recognized fact that no two people on this earth are alike. But be careful in making them differ, for they must contrast scientifically.

Taking a mother and a daughter as an illustration, let us see how they should resemble each other and how they should differ. There will be in the daughter certain inherent qualities found in the mother, but the forces of heredity will be offset, to a large extent, by the forces of environment.

If, let us say, the mother be a strong woman, one used to and capable of making decisions, then the daughter will, in all probability, be a "clinging vine." For she will have been protected and not forced to contemplate life for herself. On the other hand, if the mother be of that weak type, then the daughter, as is only natural, would take advantage of her on every opportunity and when the girl is grown, she will have become that headstrong variety whose motto is "rule or ruin."

These are all things that come to mind in listing the points of contact between writer and player. If the author and the actor carefully consider each other and, most of all, thoroughly understand each other, then they can both work intelligently toward success. But when the two fail to regard each other and each other's problems, then they begin pulling away from success and both will go down together.

It must be remembered by both writer and player that the viewing public never stops to analyze a failure or a success. They promptly dub a picture "N. G." or Okeh without reference to any particular part. Story, acting, and titles are all alike to them and if one be particularly good and the others very, very poor, they forget the good, and label the whole production "terrible." So by their wrath, the dreams of writer and actor go crashing to failure.

It is, indeed, a dependent world.



The technique of screen writing can be taught—and learned. The young photodramatist who attempts to fly before building himself wings is due for a sorry tumble.



Do you earnestly believe in the screen, or do you look down upon it, thinking to send it your less worthy efforts? If you desire to be primarily a writer of fiction, or of verse, and secondarily a photodramatist, you would best quit hoping for success. No man can worship two masters.

Plays—Not Stories

By Kate Corbaley
Author of Many Successful Screen Dramas and
Head of the Sales Department of the
Palmer Photoplay Corporation

THE use of the word "story" in speaking of photoplay material is misleading, for a story suggests the narrative form of literary expression. The screen is starving to death for dramatic material. It doesn't need any more narrative photoplays. Certainly many narratives contain elements of drama which reorganized by screen dramatists become good photoplays, but the time is coming when photoplaywrights will write *screen* drama and then that expedient will not be necessary.



Kate Corbaley

Drama is based on conflict; the antagonist or hero must triumph over the villain or protagonist and through the play, like the spirit that moved on the face of the waters, we must feel the movement of the theme. In Greek drama we actually saw Nemesis and the Fates: in our screen drama of today we see them working through man's own expression of himself in action.

Emotional or spiritual conflict makes drama, for from conflict rises the suspense that holds the audience in their seats to the end of the last reel to see just how the hero won out. One of the things we are in danger of forgetting these days is that we must give our actors something to act. Narrative does not supply them with dramatic opportunities.

A great screen actor remarked recently: "They say the truly great actor is he who gets out of the way of the play, but they don't give us a play to get out of the way of. We amble through stories in which there are no 'acting parts.'" Which significant remark translated in the terms of this article means that we are giving our stars stories and not plays. Write drama; write acting parts. When you have written a great part for an actor it is more than likely that you have made a play.

"Dreams For Sale"

By Frank C. Tillson

Who will buy the cargoes my Ship o' Dreams brings home;
A silver ship a-sailing across the moonlit sea—
Richest wares of all the world, brought across the foam?
Who will buy the golden dreams, my dreamship brings to me?

Just a bit of a fairy tale,
Just the lilt of a song,
Just the scent of roses
From the hedge as we pass along;
Just a gleam of the old romance,
Lighting the weary way—
Just a dreamer with dreams for sale—
What will you have today?

Here upon a silver screen, I spread my cargoes rare.
Won't you stop and look a bit—and dream awhile with me?
Perhaps your tired eyes will find a gleam of beauty there,
Or the magic that will take you to the Land of Memory.

Just a dream of the olden hours—
Here is your youth again.
Just a gleam from the golden hours
Shines through the mist and rain.
Just a moment in which to forget
All that is dull and gray—
Just a dreamer with dreams for sale—
What will you have today?

IN THE FOREGROUND

Being a Department of Brief Chats on Topics Within The Camera's Range

This Is *Your* Magazine

WE want you to feel that this is your magazine—that the door of the editorial sanctum is open at all times to those who wish to drop in, bearing either brickbats or bouquets.

When it appears to you that we have struck a wrong chord, that we have failed in boosting where a boost is due, or have lost our "punch" in "fighting the good fight" for the advancement of screen writers and their art, let your offering be a brickbat—the heavier the better.

Hurl it by mail or by wire—or with your good right arm—and, while rubbing our editorial head, we shall be deeply appreciative.

Of course, being merely human, we like the bouquets as well. When you see, in the columns of the *Photodramatist,* something you especially like, let us know about it. But we realize that roses have thorns, and should we discover a few of them amidst your floral offering—in the form of timely comment or suggestions for the betterment of the magazine—we will not take offense.

Indeed, our harshest critics are often our best friends. Without the stimulus of frank criticism, an editor is prone to settle into the rut of self-satisfaction; and when this occurs, he ceases to be a factor toward the betterment of his audience.

A Plea For Action

IN the current issue of Picture Play Magazine we are somewhat surprised—although, in a measure, pleased—to find a strong plea for "lowbrow films." We should not be pleased, of course, if we considered that The Observer, who signs the article, means exactly what he says when he refers to a certain type of film as "lowbrow." But we believe that we understand the state of mind that prompted his utterance, and we heartily concur with him in his plea for pictures that offer "more to feel, and less to see."

"We are weary of merely beautiful photography," says The Observer, in the course of his wail. "We snore at fine sets and gorgeous costumes. A crowd of ten-thousand extras carrying spears excites us no more than a dish of mush and milk. We are fully fed up with highbrow pictures—the kind you 'ought to see.' We never yet had a good time seeing something we 'ought to see.' More pep, say we! More guns, more detective stories, more red-hot love stories, more thrills, spine-tingling thrills, thrills that make you grab your girl's arm and gasp—action, drama, punch, galloping horses, mortgages, fires, sudden deaths, suspense, suspense, and *more suspense!*' We want the gosh-darndest drama that anyone can give us, well done. We're not crying for crudity, but we are yelling for something to happen in the picture shows."

All of which may sound more or less nebulous, at first place; but which, upon second thought, carries a very definite meaning.

In other words, The Observer wants better stories! Action stories—real photo *dramas,* written for the screen by writers who know how to visualize and to build dramatic situations.

A Word From The Wise

FEW of the Eminent Authors who have been lured into the film world by the prospect of big money and little work have remained. They have found that, while the financial emoluments of writing for the screen are indeed satisfactory, photoplay construction is not the simple pastime they believed it to be. They have discovered, as well, that they have had a new medium to master—a medium wherein action and not words is the deciding factor,—and that their literary ability has given them no advantage over those who have taken up screen drama as a profession in itself. Disgruntled by finding that, although given every opportunity, they have been in many instances outclassed by those who have made a special study of motion pictures and who have written exclusively for the screen, the great novelists and playwrights have, one by one, gone back to their first loves, and to the firmament in which they originally shone.

There are exceptions, of course. A limited number of these same authors have unbended sufficiently to admit that the photodrama is a separate entity; that it merits study and time; and that worthwhile results can be obtained when the writer is willing to forget his reputation in other fields and consent to profit by the experiences of

those who, in his own charmed circle, are comparatively unknown.

Among the few great novelists who have done this—who have taken the screen seriously—is Rupert Hughes. Firmly established as he was, and is, in the world of letters, Mr. Hughes approached the photoplay as a student. From the first, he humbly admitted his lack of technique in this new field, and as humbly sought and accepted the advice of those already established in the cinema world. As a result, Mr. Hughes has made rapid strides. His latest contributions to the silver sheet have been noteworthy efforts, and we do not doubt but what he will climb to even greater heights in the future as a screen dramatist.

For this reason, it is worth noting that Mr. Hughes has, of late, veered away from the accepted Eminent-Author idea that a great cinema drama must have its foundation in a published novel, play, or story, and that he has become converted to the principle of the "original"—the drama written exclusively for picture production.

Moreover, Mr. Hughes realizes the great need of new names in the pictures and frankly acknowledges that the present writers are unable to supply the producers with enough meritorious stories to keep pace with the demand. "New faces," he says, in a recent article in Photoplay Magazine, "are vitally needed, but they will appear in vain unless new authors keep coming along with new stories and new ideas."

Here is something for the oft-times discouraged student of photoplay writing to think about.

Prof. Pitkin's Views

"Knocking the movies" has become the most popular of all American pastimes. The mass of garbled comment that has been printed on every phase of the motion picture profession—written in the main by persons utterly ignorant of their subject, and generally after a random survey of the industry—must be highly pleasing to the purveyors of print-paper, ink, and typewriters. To sincere members of the screen world and to the real thinkers of the nation, however, it probably has been, as Octavus Roy Cohen's famous gentleman of color would put it, "anything else but."

The latest person to rush, unannounced, into the limelight with a vitriolic attack upon the motion pictures is Frederic J. Haskin, well known writer of syndicated newspaper articles. Mr. Haskin is reputed to be an excellent newspaper reporter, but it is evident, in his recent article, entitled, "Says Writing for the Films is Rank Waste of Time," that he has failed to live up to the cardinal rule of newspaperdom: i.e., get the *facts*.

It seems evident, however, that Mr. Haskin is not entirely to blame. Throughout his "story" he quotes Prof. Walter B. Pitkin, professor of Journalism at Columbia University; and, lacking the truth concerning the writing and marketing of photoplays, it is patent that he has considered Prof. Pitkin's sadly distorted, and in many instances prejudiced, statements as authoritative, and has merely passed them on to the general public for what they may be worth.

They are not worth much—unless it be to serve as an example of what ignorance and blind belief in one's self and one's own profession may lead one to. Also, we cannot help but wonder if Prof. Pitkin—being the author of a book on short-story writing—might not have had an ulterior, commercial motive in casting mud upon the original photoplay and screen technique, and in attempting to gather all aspiring writers into the fiction fold, whence—using his text-book (at $2.25 the copy) as a stepping-stone—they may mount to the dizzying heights of fame.

Is is impossible to print, intact, Mr. Haskin's lengthy article; but a few excerpts therefrom might prove highly interesting to the large number of scenario writers who have "made good" solely upon the merit of their original screen stories.

"The movies are not in the field for raw material," says Mr. Haskins, quoting Prof. Pitkin. "They prefer the finished, polished product after it has appeared in print.

"Thousands of earnest men and women today are wasting precious time trying to break into the pictures by writing for them. They are trying to break through a locked door.

'Any idea good enough for the better movies is good enough for a short story, and, as a story, can generally be sold to a magazine for more than a movie will give.

"It is estimated that the combined output of moving picture producers in this country is limited to 50 new subjects per week, while the average weekly output of the scenario-writing multitude is 8,000.

"It is so easy to dash off a movie plot in a few hundred words, that thousands of inexperienced writers are always doing it. Not more than one in a hundred ever receives serious attention."

Prof. Pitkin's bland assumption that any short story is suitable to picture production is most amusing. A few weeks as a reader in a representative film studio would open his eyes to the fact that not more than one printed story in fifty has any picture value whatever, and that, of those remaining, few possess enough dramatic action to make them desirable as picturable material without considerable rebuilding. On the other hand, although we grant that many persons rush into the scenario market without proper study and preparation, original stories—written in screen language,

properly visualized and constructed especially for picture purposes—are not only cordially received by every studio, but are read carefully, and stand a much better chance of acceptance than the fictionized plot.

Just where Prof. Pitkin obtained his figures regarding the number of photoplays submitted to studios each week we do not know; but certainly not from any reliable producer. Investigation by the *Photodramatist* reveals the fact that the largest studios in Hollywood are bewailing the fact that not enough screen plays are offered them. As for the "8,000 scenarios a week" to which Prof. Pitkin refers, this is such an absurd statement that it hardly deserves refutation. If there are that many screen plays mailed to the producers, there must be something decidedly wrong with Uncle Sam's postal service, since the largest buyer of scripts in America recently informed us that the total number of submissions of original scenarios to his studio during the past year was approximately 3,600, or an average of less than 70 per week. Other big studios report having received between 2,000 and 3,000 original scripts. Considering that many of these stories pass from one studio to another, following rejection, it may be seen that the total number of scenarios written is so far below Prof. Pitkin's estimate that his assertion is rendered ridiculous.

Certainly, anybody who "dashes off a movie plot in a few hundred words" is trying, as Prof. Pitkin puts it, "to break through a locked door." But what profession will consider seriously any aspirant who has not made a study of its requirements? To the sincere screen dramatist, however—to the man, or woman, who devotes time to the careful study of screen technique, who puts his, or her, ideas into proper form for picturization—the door is wide open, and always will be.

And to these same writers, the motion picture world offers financial rewards highly in excess of those offered by publishers of short stories.

Five hundred dollars is the lowest price that any reputable producer would think of offering to the writer of an original photoplay. The average script brings its author better than $1,000; while many sales of from $2,000 to $5,000 are reported. Indeed, such photoplay writers as H. H. Van Loan, Monte Katterjohn, Jeannie MacPherson, C. Gardner Sullivan, Frances Marion, John Emerson, Anita Loos, Thompson Buchanan, Sada Cowan or June Mathis—none of whom has ever been a short story writer—would consign any offer of less than $5,000 for an original screen story to the fireplace. Prof. Pitkin would be hard put to name more than ten fiction writers in America who have averaged better than $500 for their short stories during the past two years; and, unless he is utterly ignorant of the profession of which he claims to be a master, he knows that, aside from a few veterans in the fiction field, most story writers consider $200 a very fair price for their product.

There is another phase of Prof. Pitkin's violent outburst against the original screen drama which, we must confess, intrigues us. If writing for the moving pictures is such a rank waste of time as the worthy professor maintains, why is it that Columbia University, from which Pitkin draws his salary as an instructor, conducts both correspondence and resident classes in scenario writing? Does Professor Pitkin consider his opinion in the matter above that of the regents of one of America's greatest universities? And, if so, what do these same educational leaders think of the recent mouthings by one of their employees against a profession which, quite evidently, they heartily endorse?

As an instructor in journalism, Prof. Pitkin may lay claim to a knowledge of newspaper work in its various phases; but, despite the fact that he has written a book upon the short-story, he appears to be somewhat ignorant of the business side of fiction writing; and what he does not know regarding the construction and marketing of screen dramas would fill many volumes as large as his treatise upon story technique.

The *Photodramatist* does not wish to belittle the short story writing profession. The short story occupies a high place in American literature, and the writing of fiction is undoubtedly a remunerative and fascinating occupation. But we maintain that the writing of original photoplays for the screen is also a fascinating profession, and exceedingly more remunerative than its older cousin; and whenever Prof. Pitkin, or any other jealous advocate of other lines of literary endeavor, arises to direct a prejudiced, misleading attack upon this newest entrant in the race for artistic and professional honors, we may be depended upon to hit back with all the power in our typewriter.



TWO accepted photoplays in a year—and the wolf need never come within speaking distance of your door. This should not be a difficult achievement, for one who is willing to study.

From Pen to Silversheet

By Melvin M. Riddle

III—COSTUMING THE PLAYERS

HE CAN make a bum out of you! Or, if you have higher aspirations and would rather be a doctor, a lawyer, a king, a rajah, a Turkish prince or a Roman senator, he can do a great deal towards giving you the appearance characteristic of any of those types or a thousand others.

This man with such magic powers is the chief of the character wardrobe—one of the principal and most vital cogs in the machinery of motion picture production. His chief business in life is to make people look the part which they are to portray upon the screen, and it cannot be denied that when one can look the part, he is in a much better position to act the part.

A wise man has told us, and with much truth, that clothes do not make the man. But there is no doubting the fact that clothes are a great aid in identifying the type. When we see a soldier on the street, we know he is a soldier, not by the color of his eyes or the way he walks, but by the uniform he wears—and we know, further, whether he is a soldier of the American, the British, the French, the German or Coxey's army. We know this by the way he is dressed. And the same applies to Red Cross nurses, cowpunchers, sailors, aviators, policemen, firemen, ministers, artists, Bohemians and types in almost any walk of life.

The large character wardrobe at the Lasky studio in Hollywood, occupying the entire lower floor of a mammoth concrete building within the studio lot, is conducted under the supervision of Roy Diem. Mr. Diem spends his time making character to order, as it were. When a player in a motion picture is informed what is the nature of his role and what type of person he is to portray, he takes up his problems with the wardrobe. Mr. Diem and his assistants determine just what sort of wardrobe he is to wear, they take his measure, secure the costumes, either out of the studio stock or from one of the large rental sources, or if necessary they manufacture it themselves.

This wardrobe is known as the "character" wardrobe, as distinguished from the other department on the upper floor of the same building, which is devoted exclusively to the designing of women's fashionable dress, and will be described in detail in a subsequent article. By a "character" costume is meant any kind of apparel or dress that is out of the ordinary run of everyday apparel, or any costume that belongs to a past period of time or to any other race of people. A business suit of the period of 1890, a convict's stripes, a suit of armor or a Chinese kimona all come within the scope of the term, "character wardrobe."

To take a tour through this immense collection of wardrobe is an education in dress. It is the common belief, perhaps, that men's clothes do not undergo nearly so many changes in style and fashion as women's, but a look at some of the specimens hanging on the hooks in this wardrobe would throw a bombshell into such a belief. It is surprising to note the changes in men's clothing which have taken place even within the past ten years.

In the vast stock of character wardrobe, there are approximately fifty thousand different costumes and ten thousand varieties, including everything from shoestrings to overcoats. The department occupies a floor space of six thousand, two hundred forty square feet.

Looking about the place with a casual

Mr. Riddle's Articles

on the practical end of film production are proving immensely popular. No writer has yet given to the public a more accurate view of the "inside workings" of the big studios than has been set forth in this series. There will be another one in the March issue. Do not miss it.

glance we see uniforms, of all nations and periods, army, police, firemen's and civilian; cowboys' outfits, including all paraphernalia from spurs to hats; Indian costumes, ministers' and clergymen's costumes, robes, etc., aviators' outfits, waiters' and servants' livery from every country in the world, hunting outfits, colonial costumes, character dresses of all kinds, shirts, house dresses, frocks, convict stripes, mask ball costumes, underwear of all varieties, hundreds of styles of character boots and shoes from the most expensive to the badly worn—in short every article of apparel ever worn by man from the earliest time down to the present, and from the head dress to the shoes.

The smaller articles include badges of all kinds, medals, collars, chevrons, gloves, socks, beards and wigs, gaudy jewelry of all kinds and an infinite variety of what nots. This immense stock is systematically indexed and listed and the members of the department can lay their hands on any certain costume or article at any time within a moment's notice.

In preparing and securing the costumes for any picture, the wardrobe department of course obtains much valuable data from the research department, which provides either a photograph or an accurate description of the costume required. The moment the scenario is finished, Mr. Diem and his assistants begin their work and prepare the costumes for all the players from principals to extras. In modern pictures, even the costumes for large crowds of extras are always provided by the wardrobe department, because individuals cannot be depended upon to dress themselves with the perfect observance to detail that is now necessary, because of the world-wide circulation of motion pictures among critical audiences. The assistant director makes out a wardrobe plot, which is an outline of each costume that will be required by each player and just when it will be wanted.

For a Paramount Picture starring Betty Compson, "At the End of the World," about two hundred costumes were provided for the sequence of scenes in a single Chinese cafe setting. This was supposedly a Bohemian cafe in Shanghai and costumes had to be furnished for many types of people of various nationalities and various degrees of caste. This is only one instance out of many and considering the fact that several pictures are under production at the Lasky studio all at the same time, the involved nature of the work of this important production branch can be realized. The types in this particular setting included Chinese, English, Japanese, American, French, Turkish, Hindu and other nationalities. There were rich men, tourists, pleasure seekers, idlers and all classes from the most aristocratic on down to the dregs of human society. All these had to be appropriately costumed.

Concerning the value of the wardrobe stock—a most interesting phase—Mr. Diem said:

"The value of the stock must be expressed in two sets of figures. Its cold, commercial value is about ten thousand dollars, but in another sense, the stock is worth about a hundred thousand dollars, taking into consideration the scarcity of the articles and the time and trouble involved in securing them. For instance, we have an old English cabby's coat, green with age, which to the junk dealer wouldn't be worth over a dollar, but which we spent over a week in finding and which, because of its real age, is worth possibly a hundred dollars or more to us."

The wardrobe is constantly on the lookout for suitable stock. "On one occasion," relates Mr. Diem, "I saw a fellow on the street down town with an old coat on and one which was just the thing we needed for a character in a certain picture. I bought it right off his back for five dollars. Another time I bought a ragged fellow a brand new pair of trousers for an old, ragged pair which he was wearing. He accepted my offer quickly, thinking, perhaps, I must surely be crazy and anxious to close the deal before I came to my senses."

A striking instance of the detail involved in the selection of proper costumes was cited by the wardrobe chief. The scenes were to show a New York policeman bending down over a little boy who was picking a flower from a parking. It was necessary to investigate the exact date at which this particular species of flower bloomed in New York and then to ascertain whether or not by that date the members of the New York police force had changed to their summer uniforms.



Gossip Street

From Hollywood Boulevard to Times Square



"THE MILKY WAY," a David Butler picture, from an original story by Lottie Horner and Clyde Westover, was recently previewed and seems destined to be a success. Production has already started on "According to Hoyle," also a Horner-Westover original, at the Burson Studios. Meanwhile Vitagraph is producing "The Man from Downing Street," by the same authors. Does writing for the screen pay? Ask Lottie Horner and Clyde Westover.

JACKIE Coogan's latest, "My Boy," written for him by Coogan, Sr., and Lois Zellner, is proving a greater success than "Peck's Bad Boy." It takes an "original!"

JOHN Fleming Wilson, well known story writer, has become a convert to screen technique. He is responsible for "The Way Back," Frank Mayo's latest; and those who ought to know say that this "original" scenario surpasses anything Wilson has previously turned out.

RUPERT Hughes will begin direction of another story for the screen, "The Bitterness of Sweet," upon his return to Los Angeles. Aside from writing his own scenarios and subtitles, and directing and editing his pictures, Rupert Hughes has little to do with producing his pictures.

"THE Woman He Married," from the photoplay by Herbert Bashford, is destined for an early release by First National.

THE day of the screen writer has indeed arrived. H. H. Van Loan, internationally famous photoplaywright, has begun a nation-wide tour in which he will make personal appearances at various theatres showing productions made from his original stories. Mr. Van Loan reports a wide-spread interest in photoplay writing, and was literally "mobbed" at Phoenix, Arizona, his first stop, by admirers of his work who wanted to hear from his own lips the "secret formulas" for constructing successful screen dramas.

DORIS May's next picture for Robertson-Cole will be "Gay and Devilish," an original purchased for her.

H. H. VAN LOAN'S latest original, "Ridin' Wild," is under production at Universal City with Roy Stewart starring.

JOHNSTON McCulley, author of "The Mark of Zorro," has been engaged by Douglas Fairbanks to prepare another photoplay along similar lines for the well known star.

"LOVE'S Penalty," an original photoplay by John Gilbert, in which Hope Hampton plays the lead, has been released.

ANOTHER writer has entered the charmed circle. He is Aubrey Stauffer of Santa Barbara, who has just sold a story to Realart for Constance Binney.

"AFRAID to Fight," an "original" by L. R. Brown, is one of the recent sales reported at Universal City. Charles Sarver is writing the continuity.

CONSTANCE Talmadge is scheduled to begin shooting this month on her next starring vehicle, "The Divorcee," an original story by Edgar Selwyn.

CHARLES Kenyon, who has had many successes to his credit, has sold another "original," "Fame," to Goldwyn. He is said to have received a record price for the script.

JOHN Emerson and Anita Loos, famous screen writers, have a new picture scheduled for early release. "Red Hot Romance" is the title. It is a satire on romantic melodrama that is said to strike a decidedly new note in plot construction.

MILDRED Considine has added another to her list of successes, it seems, in "The Bride's Play," which she adapted for Marion Davies, and which is scheduled for an early showing.

PROVING that a good title can oftimes suggest a story, A. P. Younger has completed for Universal a photoplay for Gladys Walton, based on the popular song, "Second Hand Rose."

FRANCES Marion, who climbed to fame by virtue of her skill as a writer of screen dramas, is busily at work on a new story for Norma Talmadge.

AGNES Ayres' next picture will be "The Ordeal," an original story by W. Somerset Maugham.

VIOLET Clark has been rewarded for the excellence of her successful "original," "Domestic Relations," with a long-time contract with the Katherine MacDonald organization.

CHARLES Ray is back at the ol' stand, after a visit to New York. Immediately upon arrival, he plunged into work editing "Smudge," his next release, which was written by Rob Wagner, prominent motion picture authority and noted writer of "originals."

STRIKING evidence of the scarcity of well constructed "original" screen dramas may be gleaned from the experience of the Joseph M. Schenck organization when they recently sent forth a plea for a play suitable for Norma Talmadge. Despite the fact that there was a generous response to their request for "originals," and that they had offered as high as $75,000 for a story to suit Miss Talmadge's personality, none of the many photoplays read by the scenario department could measure up to requirements. The Talmadge company is very partial to "originals" when they can get what they want, as is evidenced by the many plays they have bought from John Emerson and Anita Loos, and others.

BARBARA la Marr has been selected to play the leading feminine role in Rex Ingram's next production. Miss la Marr first came to the attention of picture producers through her original screen stories, a number of her photoplays having been produced by the big studios.

EDITH Kennedy, noted photoplay writer, has finished a series of comedies for Viola Dana. She will leave soon for New York where she will prepare the continuity for a new story recently purchased by the Cosmopolitan Productions. Her sister, Clara Genevieve Kennedy, who is author of the original story, "Glass Houses," Viola Dana's latest release, is about to marry a Methodist minister.

FELIX Orman writes us from London that he recently wrote the scenario of "The Glorious Adventure," for J. Stuart Blackton. Lady Diana Manners, celebrated English society beauty, will play the leading role.

SADA Cowan's latest photoplay is being filmed at the Garson Studios.

GEORGE Ade has written a photoplay for Thomas Meighan. It is called "Our Leading Citizen," and is said to be quite characteristic of the great humorist.

HARVEY Thew's photoplay, "Midnight," is in production at Realart, with Constance Binney in the leading role.

"THE Beautiful Liar," soon to be released by First National, was filmed from an original story by George Marion, Jr. Ruth Wightman wrote the continuity.

PAUL Bern, head of Goldwyn Scenario Department, is in New York consulting President Samuel Goldwyn regarding several stories which are under consideration for production. Goldwyn's, by the way, have become thoroughly convinced that the original screen drama is the thing.

ANNA Nichols, author of "Linger Longer Letty," and a number of other stage successes, will arrive in Hollywood this month to consult Lasky's regarding an original story which will soon enter production. Another convert to screen technique!



Comment from Student Writers

A monthly department to which students are invited to contribute

A PURPOSE

By Jack Preston

I would write a play like "The Great Divide," with the feeling when screened that Moody's drama-poem had for me when fresh from the Ontario sticks, I first saw it in a Toronto playhouse.

I would go further than William Vaughn Moody. He flashed a big idea before "flashes" were effectable. I have the screen. Also I have a larger and less restricted audience. I would bring it up in its seat—not against a Sabine Woman's puritan ancestors, but against the "puritanism" in all of us.

This accomplished, I would forget all about a great playwright who died in his youth, and about his frightened little "houses" of the decade past, and remember that a later art had given me a universal language. In this language I would speak to my fellow dreamers in all lands. I would tell them of "The Great Divide" that separates our love from theirs. In the strength of their awakened yearning, I would become inspired, and with the heart's blood on my pen, write down inerasibly the effectual and everlasting damnation of War.

THEME

By M. S. C.

Theme and its presentation. To these two things the conscientious photodramatist must pay more attention if he wishes to rise above mediocrity!

One of the best sermons I ever heard was delivered by the then Archbishop of Jamaica to a congregation of blacks and browns. There were only about six white people in the audience. He chose a simple, vital truth, and put it simply. It was not above the intelligence of the most illiterate person before him. There is something inherently noble in us all. We are better than we are. The illiterate may not be a critic, but the divine spark within him recognizes sincerity, purity, generosity, self-sacrifice. For he and his friends are quite as human as the literate. He and they eat and sleep, cry and laugh, hate and love. He understood that sermon. At the same time it so gripped me that after sixteen years I still recall the occasion. The Archbishop had chosen a strong if simple theme, and he knew how to present it.

"WHY BLAME THE PICTURES?"

By Lillian E. Martin

There is so much talk among propagandists and well meaning religious organizations about the "degenerating influence of the movies" upon our boys and girls, during this fight to close the Sunday Movies, that I feel a word of sugestion, if they win against the "closing," might help to make the whole show clean and pure, as most of the pictures are, for it is not the picture that is immoral, but very often the vaudeville accompanying it.

There are nice, clean, highly entertaining vaudeville acts put on, and then there are those which are decidedly vulgar, and should not have been allowed with some of the fine, elevating pictures we have. Recently I viewed Vitagraph's "From the Manger to the Cross," the most colossal thing I have ever seen; and after the picture came a very vulgar vaudeville, which was truly revolting to the sensibilities of the most worldly, I should think.

There are so many pictures which would be appropriate for Sunday showing, that it seems to me the managers would do well to make a careful selection of films for that day. Plays like "The Miracle Man," "Honest Hutch," "The Stealers," "The Island of Regeneration," "The Old Nest," etc., would be appropriate for Sundays.

OPPORTUNITY NEEDED

By Archie B. Coon

If the younger generation of photodramatists were given a better opporunity to become actively engaged in the production of photoplays, the industry would thrive better and the art would advance. My reasons are:

The popular writers of the present time are as fossils so far as their work is concerned. By this I mean they are standing still, or in other words, they are in a rut. They write of practically the same subject; they use the same class of people, until there is no originality left in their own production. The producer seems to think that an author can write eternally on one subject and the public will demand to have the same story told again. At the same time, I believe that to most of the popular writers, the art of photoplay writing is the art of making money.

To my mind the author in the studio is sort of an "old faithful" to the producer, who is content to rely on an author's repeated words rather than make an effort to obtain something different. I do not mean to intimate that there is absolutely no originality in an author's work over his numerous previous creations, but that he has a general outlook on life peculiar to his own experiences and that he has about exhausted his supply of material dealing with that outlook.

What the moving picture needs is good psychologists.

Get some real psychologists, and you will soon see a difference. You give us too much **reel** life and not enough **real** life, and the real life we do get is not for the most part the clean, sweet, wholesome kind.

In every human soul there is some good. Cater to the best in human nature, and the best will come back to you. Take for example a sewer digger—as dirty a physical job as I can think of just now. He is covered with mud and filth, and he is content with his lot. Take him out and give him a bath, and even a cheap suit of clean clothes and a cleaner job. Will he respond? You bet he will, and he will soon wonder how he could have stood the mud and filth. Now give him a better suit, and a better job, and he responds again. Each time his mind is lifted his body responds, and vice versa, and, my friends, it is the same with pictures. That is why I am trying to write scenarios and I shall never write anything but clean, wholesome plays; and if I go down to defeat (which I shan't), I'll go down with the band playing, and the flag of peace, and joy, and happiness waving.

Photoplays in Review

By the Staff

Dr. Jim

Reviewed by Elizabeth Niles

Comment: With an old plot given novel twists, with plenty of conflict, both mental and physical, and with some goodly thrills, Dr. Jim is a compelling story. The leading character, played by Frank Mayo with excellent repression, is thoroughly sympathetic and clearly shows the power of science over brute strength. The weak, selfish wife gains the sympathy in but a few scenes besides the final one, though the beauty of Claire Winsor, playing the part, cannot help but make a firm appeal. The conflict of their two souls shows the possibility of putting subjective drama on the screen. Were the conflict not so strong and the emotions so poignant, the spectators might feel a break in the story when the antagonistic element is changed from the doctor's profession and centered in the concrete form of Captain Blake. Since each symbolizes the same lack of understanding in the minds of the husband and wife, the unity is more perfectly preserved than at first glance appears. It is a subtle type of picture, which is bound to become popular with the more intelligent class of spectators.

Synopsis: Dr. Jim, a surgeon devoted to children, is made miserable by his wife's follies. But when he has persuaded her to send away her most recent admirer and spend a quiet evening with him and the memory of their little son, he receives an urgent call to the hospital. Another time when he has stopped to see a very sick child, he is very late to take Helen to a reception. This she might have forgiven, but when a second call comes to return to the child, she is highly incensed. The child has died before Dr. Jim arrives; this is the last straw and he suffers a nervous breakdown. With none too good a grace, Helen agrees to accompany him on a long sailing voyage.

Since his nerves are still very raw, Dr. Jim is not the best of companions, and Helen soon seeks and finds the consideration she craves in the brutish skipper of the ship. Captain Blake is far from adverse to an intrigue with the pretty wife of the almost helpless Dr. Jim. The mate, however, keeps out a weather eye and interferes at crucial moments. One dark night in a terrific storm a falling mast knocks Captain Blake senseless. Dr. Jim operates to save his life. With the remark that a mistake on her part will mean death, Dr. Jim insists that Helen administer the ether.

When Helen comes on deck after the storm she sees a burial service being conducted. "Feedin' ole Blake to the fishes," one roughneck among the crew informs her. The ship is then headed for home by the mate, while the Doctor gains strength and Helen reviews her purposeless life. But one day a hatch near Helen is opened and Captain Blake bursts forth. Despite Helen's efforts to stop him, Blake makes a dash for Dr. Jim. A battle royal ensues. Dr. Jim's superior skill "out-smarts" Blake, and lays him out on the deck. Helen then rushes to her husband with all the love she is capable of feeling.

Perjury

Reviewed by Elizabeth Niles

Comment: For one who is not afraid of pathos and suffering, this is an intensely gripping picture. Despite the time lapse and the not wholly unified conflict, the spectator is held throughout by the wonderful heart interest and the exceptionally high emotion of the leading character. The two little children bring smiles through the tears. Perhaps no one but William Farnam could play this "Jean Valjean" role with such nice intensity. The characterization throughout is excellent, from the impetuous son's defense of his mother to the beastly selfishness of the step-father. The false accusation of the hero and the first confession of the real murderer fail to appear hackneyed because of the novel twist given the end of each, and because they are submerged into the greater drama of the bigger scenes. The ending appeals especially to those who are always seeking realistic endings for pictures; the union of Bob and his wife is not for material happiness, but for the greater spiritual happiness in the good of others. That such a climax may be found in real life, combined with the broader theme of human and divine justice, gives the thoughtful spectator plenty to think about for some time to come.

Synopsis: Bob Moore, general manager of Gibson Manufacturing Co., observes the office force whispering together as he comes out of the president's office. With some difficulty he persuades Williams, his friend and the cashier, to give him the cause—Bob has a very pretty wife. Bob loses his temper and swears it is the children Gibson calls to see; but the remark makes him suspicious. and when his wife forgets to tell him that Gibson called one morning, his fit of temper brings on a quarrel between husband and wife. While trying to fight it out with himself at the club, Bob hears further remarks about his wife and Gibson. Williams prevents a scandal, but urges Bob to go to Gibson and have it out. When Bob reaches the Gibson home, he is told that his employer is at the office; he follows him there. The watchman hears a pistol shot; investigation shows Gibson shot and Bob standing over the body, pistol in hand.

Bob is convicted of murder in the second degree. When in the prison he urges his wife to go away and for the good of the children to forget him. Some fifteen years later the wife's second husband is making life miserable for the two children and constantly threatening his wife that he will tell them who their father is. He drives the son from the home, but will not allow the wife or the daughter to leave. Meanwhile Williams, though he has amassed a fortune, is in constant fear of death from heart failure. During one attack, he confesses to the doctor alone that it was he, and not Bob, who killed Gibson—that he had tried to steal money from the office safe and that Gibson had caught him and tried to call the police. Recovering from his attack Williams denies ever having made the confession, until at last he is taken to the prison and confronted with the changed,

almost spiritual presence of Bob. He declares Bob innocent as his heart fails him completely. Bob returns to his wife's home and finds his son on the stairs intent upon killing his stepfather; he succeeds in dissuading him. After his daughter gives him a cup of coffee, he hears her telling her mother of her approaching marriage and her plans to take her mother away. Then the mother sees Bob and finally recognizes him. Hearing her husband on the stairs, she pushes Bob into the next room. When she defies her husband, he strikes her. Bob rushes out; as the husband pulls a gun, Bob fires. The prison warden, who had been watching Bob, exonerates him, and Bob and his wife are now happy in the happiness of their children.

Molly-O

Reviewed by Jack Timms

Comment: This is Mabel Normand's first picture since her return to the screen after a long illness. If anything, she is greatly improved by the rest, for she is more lovely than ever. Without her clever acting, the story, "Molly-O," would have lapsed into the hodge podge that it really is.

The story is a typical Sennett production; that is, it resorts to a few slap stick angles, coincidences, melodramatic situations galore, and yet he has attained some heights that are truly Griffithesque.

The casting of the picture has been well accomplished. Molly's father and mother are types, and exceptionally good ones. The mother is fat and good natured; the father is a typical Irish laborer, coarse and vulgar, but good hearted. The brother does his bit well, and we think he has portrayed the best character next to Molly.

Dr. Bryant is in the hands of Jack Mulhall, and is somewhat stiff for the leading man.

It is in such pictures as this one that the public at large revel. It is devoid of the sex element, full of delightful comedy and has a few tears interspersed.

Synopsis: Molly O'dair is the daughter of Irish parents. Her mother is a laundress, and Molly is the general factotum. She is an ambitious girl, dreaming of better things—especially a handsome and romantic husband. A paper, announcing Dr. Bryant as an eligible bachelor, falls into her hands, and romance is spelled in capital letters.

With a bundle of laundry in one hand and a lunch pail in the other, she starts out. but is stopped by an excited mother—the baby is sick. Always ready with assistance, she rushes in, and the physician is *her* Dr. Bryant. Her bright attractiveness causes him to offer a "lift" in his car. Lunch delivered to her father, she takes the laundry to its destination, and through a series of incidents is forced to exit via the front door, here she encounters the doctor again, and trouble starts.

A Charity Ball, in which the Doctor is the prime factor, is announced. Molly just must attend, but father says "No!" Mother remembers that she was a girl once, and she assists Molly to plan the escapade. A friend secured a costume, that of a princess, and a wonderfully beautiful girl attends the ball. The Doctor's fiancee was to lead the march with him, but she was romancing with another, and missed the cue. Molly arrived, and was just entering when the curtains parted and she was revealed as Queen of the Ball. Startled, but with true Irish wit, she responds to the call, and fits into the breach nicely. The fiancee, in a rage hands back the ring.

Home from the ball, Molly finds things difficult; despite mother's pleading. With no place to go, she hunts up Dr. Bryant. He is delighted at the trust she shows in him. The next morning father is bent upon vengeance and goes to the doctor's home, only to find that Bryant has done the right thing and married Molly.

Miriam, the doctor's first sweetheart, decidedly angry, decides to "bring Molly to time" and through gambling debts incurred by Molly's brother, places her—Molly—in the toils of an unscrupulous man. He kidnaps her in a dirigible, but she is rescued by her husband, through the use of a coast patrol hydroplane. The dirigible is aflame, and they leap from it attached to a parachute. Safe at last, even though they stand waist deep in water their arms around each other's neck their lips meet.



WIVES play an important part in photoplays nowadays.

Formerly it was the sweet young thing, the school girl, who got the close-ups on the screen, but now it is the maturer woman, the matron, who has come into her own. Here are a few "wife" plays recently released:

Maurice Tourneur's "The Foolish Matrons"; Thomas H. Ince's "Hail the Woman"; Anita Stewart's next production entitled, "The Woman He Married"; Constance Talmadge's "Woman's Place"; Anita Stewart's "Virtuous Wives," a special picture entitled "Choosing a Wife"; Constance Talmadge's "A Temperamental Wife"; Mack Sennett's "Married Life"; Katherine MacDonald's "Trust Your Wife"; Marguerite Clark's Scrambled Wives"; Constance Talmadge's latest released picture, "Wedding Bells"; Whitman Bennett's "Wife Against Wife," and Allen Holubar's "Man, Woman, Marriage."



Questions Answered

Concerning the Writing of Photoplays

Q.—It seems very hard for me to express my themes in action. Do you think that if I should write magazine stories for the present, it would aid me to write for the screen later on?—Jno. B.

A.—I do not. The more time you spend in writing magazine stories, the more difficult it will be for you to get away from a narrative style of writing. Study for the screen first; then if you desire to return to short story writing you will be able to develop narrative fiction which might be adaptable for the screen.

Q.—Do you think it would aid me in writing photoplays if I visited the studios and watched the filming of pictures?—A. M.

A.—I do not believe you would gain much benefit from such a casual study of film production. The technique of picture making is so intricate that in merely witnessing the filming of certain scenes you would become bewildered. Analyzation of successful pictures as shown on the screen would be of much greater benefit.

Q.—Must every story contain a love affair to be successful?—Sarah J.

A.—Some plays, of course, do not include a love affair, but they are at a distinct disadvantage in the market. Many strong stories, though, contain this element only to a slight degree. It may be subordinated to the principal interest in the story.

Q.—Why is it that I have had a Japanese story returned?—W. B.

A.—Probably because you have used Japanese characters in too close relation with American characters. There is a natural antipathy toward the intermingling of the Mongolian races with the Caucasian. If the American characters are sufficiently strong and can "hold their own" against the Japanese, if there is no excessive love element introduced, and the Caucasian race is triumphant, the story might receive consideration. We must also avoid all angles that will arouse governmental antipathy.—L. N.

Q.—Why is it that we are told that lapses of time are not desirable, when several recent successes involve as much as twenty years lapse of time in the action.—B. L. T.

A.—There is no hard and fast rule that will govern all photoplays. In pictures that have a tremendous heart interest, and drawing power, many of the rules are overlooked. For the program picture, a quick, snappy story is desired, and a lapse of time cannot be used to advantage in this class.

Q.—I have been told that my stories are too narrative; that they are lacking in dramatic conflict—how about "The Old Nest," "Dangerous Curve Ahead" and "Humoresque"? I failed to find much dramatic conflict in these pictures? —S. A. R.

A.—Such pictures as you mention are usually designated as *"narrative* drama." They do not follow all the dramatic principles closely, and the situations contain drama of such a subtle nature that it does not seem to be drama. A story of this kind is exceedingly difficult to write; it requires masterly skill in development to be really effective.

Q.—How can I know just what a cameraman will be able to film? I am worried as I do not know whether they will be able to photograph some of the action of my story or not.—M. S. P.

A.—I advise you not to worry about photography. If a story is sufficiently compelling; sufficiently novel, the producer will manage to get it on to celluloid, somehow. This phase of the industry has gone ahead by leaps and bounds, you know. Indeed, in many instances, it has left the "writing" and the "acting" far behind. Remarkable photographic effects are now obtained. Write a really strong story, and the cameraman will see to it that it gets "shot" effectively.

Q.—What is the meaning of "counter plot?" —B. L.

A.—"Counter plot" is simply one plot which is brought into opposition with another plot. The word "plot" in this connection signifies "conspiracy" or "scheme," having nothing to do with the connotation of the word as it is used in photoplaywriting.

Q.—I do not seem to be able to differentiate between "theme" and "plot." Can you help me?—J. R. F.

A.—"Theme" may be likened to an architect's plans of a house; the idea, the entity, with which you start out on your enterprise. "Plot" is the actual building,—one being the concrete *expression* of the other... Do you see?

Q.—Will you please tell me why it is that when we would-be photoplay writers are instructed not to use certain incidents or motivations in our stories, we see these very things presented on the screen in the season's successes?—A. V. N.

A.—We appreciate the full significance of that question. We can only say that the plays of today are very faulty. But the general trend is toward the raising of the standard in subject and construction. What you see today will probably not be acceptable a year hence. You are working for the future. Many of the faults against which you are cautioned are the result of adaptation of books or stage plays. Others owe their existence to the fact that often plays are hurriedly put together or revised in the studios and there is not time for the working out of novel and dramatically ideal situations.

Q.—Western stories have been produced in such quantity in the past that I find it almost impossible to devise methods of treating the situations that would make them appear fresh and novel. Is there a new angle?—H. L. B.

A.—Characterization offers the best opportunity of attacking the western type of story and making it attractive. By giving careful attention to your characters you find it easier to get away from the mechanical treatment of situations and the old type of melodrama.

Q.—Is a brief synopsis of any value aside from interesting an editor in the story?—L. P.

A.—It enables a beginner to discover whether the plot is well knit, and when it is difficult to condense a story it is usually because the interests are too scattered.

(*Continued on Page 38*)



Little Hints for Screen Writers

FORGET the check that you expect to receive for your photoplay and you undoubtedly will do better work. The true artist must hold the financial reward secondary, else he will lose the subtle thing that makes for success. After all, the greatest recompense to the sincere writer comes in a thousand unexpected ways. Once the creative instinct is aroused and fostered, there is a vast vista of possibilities opened to the screen dramatist. A better understanding of life, a finer philosophy, a more perfectly molded character—these are but a few of the benefits accruing therefrom. When one has these, the financial emoluments are certain to follow.

UNDOUBTEDLY, a large number of screen writers have an ambition to become staff writers in the big studios. There are certainly many such opportunities for the photoplay writer who has learned his profession thoroughly. It should not be forgotten, however, that no profession will admit to its ranks one who has not undergone a long period of careful study and preparation. The producers have no time or money to spend in training apprentices. Show them what you can do by submitting well-written, acceptable dramas, and you will find that you have the "Open Sesame" to a staff position.

THE photoplay writer may learn a valuable lesson from a news item recently sent the *Photodramatist* by the Alumnae Council of Goucher College, Maryland, which gives the result of a vote recently taken amongst eighty-five girls of the Senior class on the subject, "What's the Matter With the Movies?" Fifty-two of them blamed trite themes for the failure of many pictures to succeed; thirty-three objected to the surfeit of sensational advertising. Comments on recent plots were substantially the same: "—themes hopelessly hackneyed," "plots ridiculous and impossible," "nothing but faces and clothes," "if you've seen one, you've seen them all," "the picture alone is not enough—there should be a story." In other words, what these college girls want is, to use their own words, "less pulchritude and more plot." The wise photoplay writer will pay strict attention to these indications of the trend of public opinion.

MANY an otherwise acceptable photoplay has been rejected because the writer thereof has persisted in injecting his, or her, own comments and witticisms into the midst of the drama. The screen writer should have such control of his medium that any observations which he wishes to "put over" may be expressed through the words or actions of one of the characters in the story itself. To impose the author's personal philosophy upon the busy scenario editor is to break his unity of thought, with the result that his mind is distracted from the real merit of the story, and a rejection slip follows.

WITH censorship rife in the land and a large number of misguided people bitterly criticizing the motion pictures, it is well for the screen writer to tread softly. Avoid whenever possible anything morbid or unpleasant, and let optimism be the keynote of your dramas, even though it may seem to detract from its artistic effect. Producers are taking no chances upon buying a story that might offend in the least degree, at the present time, and if you wish to see your stories on the screen, you must give the producers something in which they can see financial returns.

Questions Answered

(*Continued from Page 36*)

Q.—I can tell by the comments of editors when they return my stories that they do not see them as I do. Why is it they will not take the time to visualize them and grasp the theme?—P. J. C.

A.—Editors are eager for stories that have a big theme, but the theme must be presented in a story that makes it clear in dramatic action. Perhaps you do not get the proper perspective when you visualize your stories, and see many things that you do not present in your synopsis. Remember that the editor's success depends upon his appreciation of screen values, and he visualizes in terms of action.

Q.—Why must we inevitably have a happy ending? Would there not be more novelty if the ending were truer to life?—J. V. M.

A.—The answer to your question lies in a fundamental trait of human nature. Since the days of the rainbow and the receding flood, people have held faith in the promise that something better is always coming. The young girl is always hoping that someday her golden young man will appear; when she goes to the movies she sees herself as the girl whose love dream is realized. The honest business man still hopes that in real life the dishonest man will be defeated, and he wants to see the hero's efforts rewarded. Even the crook, whose conscience reminds him now and then that good must triumph, enjoys the assurance that when he truly repents, he will win the love and respect of his fellow men. Hence the happy ending sends the spectators from the theater with renewed hope that all is right with the world and that their desires will be answered tomorrow or the next day.

Q.—My story was returned recently with the comment that it was hackneyed. I am sure the plot is a good one; what can I do with it to give it novel treatment?—T. O. V.

A.—There are a variety of ways of treating the same plot. Depending upon the nature of yours, it might be possible to change the setting and thereby gain novelty. For instance, take your story out of a high social setting in New York and put the same characters into a small town in a less affluent walk of life, or put them somewhere in the great outdoors. Another remedy might be to turn your plot upside down and have everything done in just an opposite manner from that originally intended. If you feel that it is the problem of your theme which is hackneyed, use a new problem to lead up to your climactic solution; or reverse this process, by changing the solution of the problem. Sometimes a different combination of situations will produce novelty. Above all have faith that a novel treatment is possible.

Q.—Some time ago I wrote a story which dealt partly with civilian and partly with army life. The story was certainly dramatic and I have reason to believe it was good because I showed it to several friends who are good judges. This story was returned from no less than four of the leading studios with the usual brief comment, "Unsuited to present requirements." I was rather at a loss to account for this and showed the work to another friend who suggested that possibly the reason for the adverse judgment was that one of my leading characters, a major in the regular army, was a scoundel. Could this possibly be the cause of the rejections?—James L.

A.—Of course we are unable to say definitely whether this was the cause of the rejections or not, but it may well have been. There is a laudable and well rooted objection to showing army or navy officers committing acts "unbecoming to an officer and a gentleman". It is never wise to show any servant of the government whether naval or military, federal or civic officials in acts of crime. Such stories have a tendency to throw discredit on the government and this is well known to the producers; therefore, it is well for you to avoid them in the future.

The Guild Forum

(*Continued from Page 12*)

flat, stale and unprofitable mess of bad English. As a crowning touch he removed the heading, "Our Bucolic Press," and substituted the more dignified caption, "Our Contemporary."

The proof-reader's feat should not go unrewarded. Maybe "The Bookman" can be induced to hire him to write a high-brow article on "The Alleged Art of the Motion Picture." Anyway, he's too good a man to be reading other people's "copy."

"Write Them So That They Will Produce Them"

(*Continued from Page 17*)

likes wholesome stories. He may want a little thrill, he may like a touch of danger, but back of it all he wants something that will appeal to his sense and grip his sympathy—and won't cost him too much, and if he can get it he'll pay for it either as producer, exhibitor or spectator, and you, as the fellow who writes it, will get the first whack at the commercial end of it, for you will get paid for a creation that is not only artistically but commercially possible.



"Why, *I* could write a better story than that!"

Thousands say that, just as *you* have said it dozens of times

Perhaps you could

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"But," you say, "I am not a writer. I am only a housewife—or a salesman"—or whatever you are.

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In the three years of its existence the Palmer Corporation has trained many scenario writers and sold many of their photoplays. You have sat spellbound in your theatre and witnessed the work of Palmer students which was written in farm houses, city flats, and mining camps.

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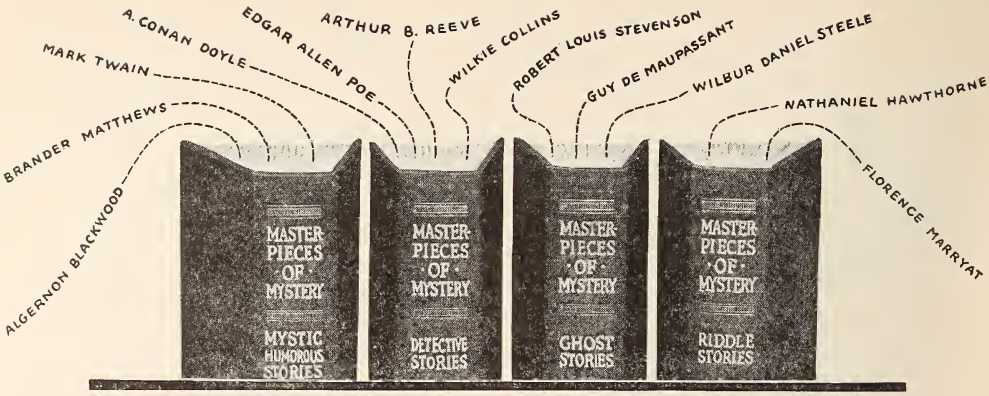
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The PHOTODRAMATIST

THE SCENARIO WRITER'S MAGAZINE



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PRINCIPLES OF PHOTOPLAY CONSTRUCTION

By H. H. VAN LOAN

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MARCH, 1922 MAR -8 1922 Volume III. No. 10.

The PHOTODRAMATIST



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NO SCREEN WRITER SHOULD MISS

the April issue of The Photodramatist. A number of feature articles by noted authorities on photoplay writing, as well as the regular departments, will make it one of the most interesting numbers we have ever published.

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LEGAL SERVICE BUREAU

Palmer Photoplay Corporation

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation announces the inauguration of a Legal Service Bureau, to be operated in the interests of students of its Department of Education, and established authors.

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The PHOTODRAMATIST



"The Truth About Hollywood"

An Appeal to the American Public for Justice and Fair Play for the Motion Picture Profession

By Alfred Hustwick
Of The Screen Writers' Guild

A CAMPAIGN of calumny against the people who are engaged in the motion picture industry is now being waged throughout the United States by newspapers and magazines which are willing to ignore facts and publish lies for the sake of obtaining more circulation.

YOU—the people for whom motion pictures are made—the people who find in motion pictures your chief form of entertainment—the people in whose hands rests the fate of the motion picture art and industry—*you* are being deliberately misled into a belief that motion picture people are sunk in a morass of immorality, that Hollywood—the community in which most motion picture people live—is a sink of iniquity.

Two unfortunate occurrences, affecting two prominent people in the motion picture world, have been basely exploited by mendacious space-writers, by yellow journals, by unprincipled magazine publishers, as an excuse to pander to the lowest curiosity of the mass mind. This sensational and unspeakable publicity threatens the very existence of the motion picture industry. Only calm refusal to believe the lurid stories presented to you, only the exercise of your common-sense and your sense of justice, only a deliberate decision upon *your* part to await *proof* before swallowing the wild fiction served up to you, *only your good sense* and *fairness* can prevent irreparable damage being done to the motion picture art and industry and to the vast army of its workers who are being condemned *without a hearing.*

"Truth is mighty and will prevail!"

The *truth* about the motion picture people and Hollywood is what you *want* to know. It will reach you—but slowly, and against opposition. Sin in any form—real or imaginary—is *news.* Virtue is *not news*—it is not even always "its own reward."

Will you believe that *we,* the 60,000 workers in the motion pictures in California, are as respectable, as law-abiding, as home-loving as *you* are? Will you believe that Hollywood has *less* crime than any city even *twice* its size in America? That Hollywood, where most of us live, has *more* schools and *more* real home life than any other city of its size in America? That such immorality and degeneracy as exists in the motion picture world is confined to an almost negligible number of

bad characters, as few in proportion to the whole number engaged as in any *other* business or profession?

These are just a few *facts* and the proof of them is a matter of public record. Remember these facts—withhold judgment until you learn the *truth.* It will be published for you before long—by fair-minded newspapers and magazines that are conducting impartial investigations; by social and civic organizations that are compiling *facts*; and by the motion picture people in a body who intend to defend their names and reputations, their art and their industry, through the medium of this screen.

The serious situation of the motion picture art, the motion picture industry and the people who earn their livelihood from the pictures, standing at the bar of public opinion, tried and condemned without hearing by a scandal-loving press, represented by divided counsels, and in grave danger from a lawless mob of so-called "reformers"—this was the picture painted in these columns last month. The suggestion was made that the Screen Writers' Guild, as the only really articulate branch of the motion picture industry, should shoulder the burden of clearing the defendants of the preposterous charges brought against them by the panderers of the daily and periodical press, by prurient preachers and professional propagandists.

The Whirlwind

In this article, which set forth these facts and suggested immediate action, the editor of this department referred to the damage done by ill-considered publicity sent out from studios, publicity which had fed the public appetite for sensation, invested the "movies" with an evil glamor, and started a wind of envy, resentment and even hatred which now threatens to return as a whirlwind of public condemnation.

Four weeks after this article was written, a week after it was published, even while the Guild was at work organizing a publicity campaign to correct the slanders hurled at the industry and its people, the whirlwind swept over the country towards Hollywood, unroofing the motion picture edifice, scattering our people in confusion, threatening permanent damage to an institution which educates and entertains the whole world. There is no need to recite here the story of the Taylor murder nor to deal at length with the way the press of the country and the enemies of picturedom have exploited it. It is sufficient to say that this tremendous whirlwind of lies, slanders, libels and half-truths has dazed the motion picture world, amazed the public, and forever disgraced the press of America.

Out of Evil

In the face of calamity, human nature, generally speaking, reacts in a fairly consistent manner. First, confusion and alarm; second, a kind of hopeless calm; third, a never-failing manifestation of the primal instinct of self-preservation, a will to live, a mental and physical activity in which the fighting spirit of the species predominates. This cycle has been followed in the motion picture world. Sixty thousand people, condemned without a hearing, villified and denounced in a shameful manner, have passed the stage of horrified surprise and hopeless bewilderment. The truth about the motion picture people and Hollywood, the home of the industry, will now be told. The Screen Writers' Guild has led the way. Already an enlarged publicity committee is at work disseminating **facts**—not attacking our assailants or threatening our defamers, not covering up whatever of evil exists in our ranks (and there is some evil everywhere), but in a calm and constructive manner this committee is using every legitimate means to allay public excitement, to place the real facts before the people, to offset the enormous damage that has been done by our own publicists first, and the sensation-mongers second.

"Out of evil cometh good." It is our hope that good will come out of this evil campaign of calumny. **Virtue** is not **news,** but virtue **wronged is news,** and already the tide of reaction has set in. Newspapers which are above the "yellow" class have sent trained writers, responsible people, to investigate the **facts.** On this ebb-tide we may float to a victorious vindication. So long as the attacks upon the industry were spasmodic and sporadic, it was difficult to offset them. Now that a general campaign of villification has been conducted against us, the plain statistics that prove the motion picture people to be decent, law-abiding, home-making and home loving citizens are **news.** The opportunity presents itself for the picture people to clear their good name and correct the silly impression of their lives and characters which has been made by years of foolish and

ill-advised publicity and by unprincipled traducers.

Our Battle of the Marne

"If," as Mr. Kipling says, "we can keep our heads when all about us are losing theirs," if the calmer minds in the picture business can work unhampered by those hot-heads whose indignation threatens to destroy their fighting effectiveness, then the chances are more than even that not only will good result from a present evil but that, by good generalship, the motion picture people may turn an apparent disaster into a tremendous and far-reaching success. Foch, before the Marne, held on in the face of tremendous odds, waiting, waiting, waiting—until the first sign of weakness appeared in the enemy's attack. Then, with rapier-like swiftness, he hurled his battered forces forward and turned defeat into victory.

Now, with the better minds of the country feeling that the picture industry **can't** be as bad as painted, with the more sober newspapers realizing that the very life of the fourth biggest industry has been endangered solely to furnish salacious headlines, with the financial powers awakening to the fact that this outburst of idiotic scandal has cost millions of real dollars and has seriously disorganized business, and the various elements of the picture business united, at last, by a common cause, there is tremendous power back of the movement to give the picture people a square deal. Sensational publicity will no longer be sent from the studios, exhibitors will refrain from advertising innocuous pictures as if they were full of sex-sensation, newspapers will examine motion picture "news" with a more critical eye, and the public will learn, slowly but surely, that the picture of a debauched industry and a perverted Hollywood served up to them as gospel truth by the press is nothing more than an insult to their intelligence and an insidious attempt to make them exchange their dollars for dirt. The sensation-mongers are having their day. Our turn is coming. Whether the motion picture art and industry will survive this mass attack depends upon our patriotism, our ability to keep cool under fire, and the genius of our generals.

(Editor's Note—The foregoing article is so vital and timely that it is being printed this month in lieu of the usual Guild Forum. In the coming issue under the customary department heading, Mr. Hustwick, in behalf of the Screen Writers' Guild, will give further important information regarding the movement to combat the vicious, untrue attacks that have been made upon the picture industry.)

Elinor Glyn on "Preparation"

By Robert E. Hewes



Elinor Glyn

IF Shakespeare himself were alive today and should attempt translating his great plays into motion pictures without the proper preparation—the mastery of screen technique and of picture values—he would fail."

These words, spoken to me by Elinor Glyn, I think, present very vividly the secret that lies back of her cinematic success. She understands that first of all the thing means *work*.

Very often I hear someone aspiring to success in photodramatic art declare:

"It is getting the first one across that counts, after that it is easy!"

It may be easy if one continues to *work*, but the necessity of combining that same quality with ambition is forcibly brought home to one by coming in contact with noted writers. Madam Glyn, with all her success, her high position in her profession, is one of the hardest working women I have ever met. She knows that art means work, and does not believe that great things in literature are dashed off in the heat of inspiration without a background of real labor.

"I am often asked," she told me, "how with my first book, 'The Visits of Elizabeth,' I achieved such a success. Ah, they did not know that for twelve years I had been preparing for literary work by intensive reading and study!"

Speaking of motion pictures, she says: "It means hard work . . . hours and days of preparation!"

And Madame Glyn is emphatic in stressing that word *preparation*.

"We think the art of Pavlowa is wonderful," she said, "but it has been made so by preparation. In drama, music, dancing, whatever is art, there must be . . . preparation."

So, the substance of Elinor Glyn's philosophy of the cinematic art seems to be — preparation first, and inspiration second.

The Screen Drama League

An Organization to Combat the Censorship Evil

The time has come for those who believe in motion pictures—in freedom of expression for this newest, and greatest, of all arts—to band themselves together in an organized fight against censorship. After a thorough study of the censorship movement, throughout the United States, *The Photodramatist* realizes the grave menace that confronts photoplay writers. Were advocates of censorship concerned only with the elimination of indecent films, this magazine would raise no protest against their efforts; but it is patent, after a perusal of the absurd decisions made by various censorship boards now in operation that immorality in pictures is the least consideration of these bodies.

Essentially, such boards are political and financial organizations—appointed with ulterior intent—and they appear to be concerned first of all with their "jobs" and last of all with the character of the productions upon which they pass. The fact that films approved in Pennsylvania, for instance, are utterly condemned in Ohio, only to be passed "in part" by the New York censors, shows how ridiculous censorship, in actual operation, really is. No two groups of citizens seem to have the same ideas regarding the films they view. Meanwhile, the rejection, or mutilation, of each film is costing producers—and, indirectly, photoplay writers—vast sums of money, and bids fair to cripple the industry.

Censorship strikes at the heart of the American Constitution. It is in direct violation of the Declaration of Independence, which proclaims that all men were created equal and have the right to pursue liberty and happiness according to the dictates of their own conscience. There are laws in existence, both state and federal, which give the authorities full right to ban any lewd form of entertainment and to throw into prison anyone who sponsors indecent films or theatrical enterprises. With this machinery at hand for the suppression of the few really immoral pictures, why, then, do the fanatics and demagogues favor censorship? The answer is that they do not favor censorship—they favor the absolute extermination of motion pictures themselves—some for fanatical religious beliefs and others because they fear the political effects upon their career of the films—and that censorship is only the opening wedge in their campaign to kill the industry.

The Screen Drama League has been formed for the purpose of opposing this movement; to protect the picture industry against relentless enemies; to foster the support of good films, and to elevate the screen to its rightful place as an art equal in importance to any other that the world has ever known. It is unchartered and unincorporated, and has no entrance fees or dues; and *The Photodramatist* is lending its aid to this worthy cause free of charge and without any financial support whatsoever from any source.

The system of the organization is simple. In every city and town there are many friends of the films. We ask you, as a reader of this magazine, to get in touch with at least three others who hold opinions similar to yours. Meet at your home, or wherever you desire. Appoint a president, vice-president, and secretary, and thus form a chapter of the Screen Drama League. The secretary may then carry on all correspondence necessary with *The Photodramatist*. Each month, this magazine will print advice and instructions pertinent to the campaign against censorship. The principal duties of each chap-

(Continued on page 40)

Our Creed

1. To free screen drama from the burdens of minority censorship, political exploitation and the emasculating influence of organized propaganda.
2. To assure to the photodramatist the same freedom of expression accorded to authors, artists and other creative workers.
3. To secure for the photodramatist the right to submit his work to the public unmutilated, thereby assuring him a review by the majority, subject only to proper police regulations.
4. To support and encourage makers of clean and worthy pictures, and to discourage the manufacturers of unworthy pictures by refusing patronage to them.
5. To encourage school, social and parental supervision of children's film entertainment by selecting for them those pictures which are most suitable, thereby permitting the adult to enjoy the same measure of realism on the screen as has always been found in literature and on the speaking stage, and permitting the screening of dramatic masterpieces without unwarranted expurgation of vital scenes.
6. To use voice, pen, vote and personal influence, so far as is possible, in resisting not only class legislation against the screen but also any legislation and propaganda seeking to impose upon any creative art or medium of expression—press, pulpit or public rostrum—censorship or hampering restrictions desired only by a minority.
7. To study and support the best in screen drama and to foster, in every possible way, the development and elevation of the motion picture art.

"The Key to the Kingdom"

Training, Plus Industry, Will Open the Door of Fame to the Screen Dramatist

By Beatrice Marean Snowden

IT is well to remember at the outset that in the art of photoplay writing as well as in all other branches of worthwhile professions, the old rule, which is as true as it is old, tells us, "There is no easy road to success".

Photoplay writing is the art of visualizing the product of the imagination into real living characters who play their brief part on the screen with a realism as appealing to the beholder as life itself. There is no mystery about photoplay writing. All that is required are the elementary essentials necessary to the work. These briefly summed up are: First, an artistic and creative talent; Second, a fair education; Third, a constructive imagination; Fourth, indomitable perseverance and untiring industry; and last, but not least, a thorough training in the technic of preparing one's work for production. No matter how blest one may be with natural talents, lacking the elementary essentials of the subject in hand, it will be impossible to succeed in photoplay writing, a fact to which many a discouraged beginner will testify.



Mrs. Snowden is one of America's pioneer writers. "Deepdale," "When a Woman Loves," and other of her novels, published years ago, ran through scores of editions. In her later years she has been attracted to the photodrama, which, she writes us, she considers the marvel of the age.

A course of instruction and proper training under competent instructors is therefore absolutely necessary for success in photoplay writing. After one has mastered "the rules of the game" and the stage is set for achievement, it now rests with the student whether he will succeed or not. One's instructors can only take one so far, the rest lies with the student himself, and here is where perseverance, industry, and a determination to succeed play a large part.

One should not be discouraged if the first, second, or third attempt at photoplay writing is not a success. Submit patiently to adverse criticism, and try again and again, always with unfaltering faith that success will come eventually.

Have the plot of your play clearly outlined in your own mind and then proceed according to your instructions to put the synopsis of your story into proper form, clearly told in simple yet expressive terms. Interest in the picture must not be allowed to lag but should be maintained throughout the play.

In writing your story strive for originality, though so much has been written on almost every permissible subject, still the field is wide from which to make your choice.

Make a study of your fellow beings so that you may make the characters in your story true to life and not mere puppets to jump when the string is pulled. Make them like real men, women, and children such as you meet and see in every day life, and then endow them richly with romance, bringing out their beauty of character, their patience

under affliction, their trust in the Infinite, their love for humanity; rewarding them at last with the "peace that passes understanding." Leave "vamps", villains, murders, robbery, adultery, illicit love, and other crimes untouched. The public is properly sickened by the daily report of such things, so let us spare it these revolting scenes when it comes to us for entertainment.

Pure, simple stories, interestingly told and uplifting in character will always meet with the approval of the public, for in spite of the materialists, humanity is strangely spiritual, vibrant and receptive to the noble and heroic.

Among the best themes there is love—always beautiful and appealing,—love pure and simple between man and man, or between man and his faithful animal; parental love,—especially mother love; conjugal love; the pure and compelling love between man and maiden; the love of fame—ambition; love of and loyalty to one's country; religious plays showing the beauty and consistency of the true Christian character; educational plays and travels;—all these subjects can be made the basis of photoplays, showing that truth is more wonderful than fiction.

Plays that are humorous in character will always be popular, for the world loves a good honest laugh. The photodramist who has the art of successfully combining humor and pathos has a power in his hands that few can resist.

One strong attribute of the human heart is a desire to encompass the unknown, to reach up after the Infinite; and a play that leads an audience of playgoers on through the mazes of mystery, ever promising some startling development, will claim the attention and entertain as few others can.

Entertainment as well as wholesome enlightenment is the end and aim of photoplays. Old and young alike seek these. If the plays are of the rightful character, they are capable of doing a world of good; if they deal with crime and vice pictured in alluring colors, it is frightful to think of the evil influence they may have on the public, especially the youth of our day. If the plays are produced according to the lines of high ideals and strict morality, untainted by suggestions of anything that would turn the mind of youth into unclean and demoralizing channels, then we shall hear no more about censorship.



What a Wonderful World

By M. W. Bennett

They're going to cut out my tobacco.
To smoke is sinful of me.
My coffee must go, the reformers say so.
They'll put the kibosh on my tea.
They're going to stop all kinds of dances,
For dancing is vicious to see.
And when they close all the movies and shows,
What a wonderful world this will be!

I must stop eating peanuts on Sunday
In this glorious land of the free.
And the aces and kings, and deuces and things
Of the deck they will not be for me.
Baseball will be voted illegal.
Croquet, tennis and golf will all flee.
When "they" have gone through what they're planning to do,
What a wonderful world this will be!

Of course they will stop osculation,
Love making's a curse, they agree.
If a bloke plants a kiss on a charming young miss,
The prison's gray walls he will see.
The baby cab business will languish,—
No census for posterity.
With a ban on the stork, from Spokane to New York,
What a wonderful world this will be!

"Why Write Photoplays?"

Some Very Good Reasons for Doing So Are Given in This Interesting Article

By Katherine Leiser Robbins

SHOULD I say I am writing photoplays because this form of writing pays better than any other it might sound mercenary—something no writer wants to be thought—and it would not be all of the truth. Though writing for the movies does pay far better than any other form of authorship, it is a fascinating and absorbing pursuit as well. It is the Art that most nearly approaches Life, which all Art strives to do; and one that attracts not only the professional writer of highest note—Kipling, Rupert Hughes, Gertrude Atherton, for instance — but also the discouraged little tyro, whose imperfections of style and lack of rhetorical knowledge bar his way in the path of literature.

Not that "scenario" writing does not require all the thought and effort one can put into it, but it does not demand the literary polish that comes of long and arduous training nor the complicated technique of the novel. One must have ideas, of course, but just so they are presented in a clear, concise, logical way it is sufficient.

It is natural for people to think in pictures. All children do; and the earliest form of writing was in pictures instead of words; and though manifold books and hurried reading has blurred this instinct in many of us, a little practice in visualization—and my, how the ability to think in pictures grows!—will bring a rich reward for effort expended, for trying again, and *again*, to have one's work produced in living pictures on the screen.

When my first short story was published—in the days when little of the possibilities of the cinema art was known, and motion pictures consisted mostly of the comic, storyless antics of people chasing and tumbling about the screen—I had thought that to see my name in the listed contents of a magazine, and to read my fancies in its printed pages, was the most gratifying sensation I should ever know. But I was to learn what a small matter this was compared with the first showing of one of my stories on the screen.

I had looked forward to seeing the photoplay with some pleasurable expectancy; but as I sat there in the hushed dimness of the theater and saw the creatures of my fancy, with the faults, frailties, virtues and aspirations with which I had endowed them come to life, and watched them breathe and move, and do the things I had designed them to do—well, if I tried to tell exactly how I felt about it, it would sound florid, exaggerated, rather absurd, so I'll just say that I came out of the theater with a new vision of opportunity, of the wonder of art, and an incentive to work such as I had never had before.

Incidentally, I will say that the Moving Picture Company paid me two thousand dollars for the film rights to that first story of mine, so you see there is more than one good reason for writing photoplays.

And another thing: it is the heart's desire of every artist, whether he be writer, painter, speaker, musician, poet, to reach out and move as great a portion of humanity as possible. And what chance has he compared with that of showing his work on the screen?

Take Rupert Hughes' "Old Nest" for instance. The story was published quite a few years ago in a popular magazine. I read it, thought it a "sweet, human story" then proceeded to forget all about it, as I believe did the majority of those who happened to read that particular number of the magazine. The photoplay was

Katherine L. Robbins

was content to sell stories to the magazines for from $20 to $200, she writes us, until one day The Universal Film Co. offered her $2,000 for one of her efforts. Since then, she has sold five screen dramas at prices that would stagger the average author of published fiction.

shown here a few weeks ago; and it was almost as though I was lifted bodily and swept back to my Old Nest, to my childhood, and to my mother's and father's tender, self-sacrificing care. These had become dim memories, buried under the litter of busy, everyday affairs, but the magic of art brought them back with such realness and poignancy that my heart ached and my eyes filled with tears. I felt a little shame-faced, and furtively dabbed my eyes, until I saw one tear also roll down the lean, bronzed jaw of a prosperous-looking, typical business man near me, heard sniffs in various directions, and caught the flutter of several handkerchiefs.

Then I realized that it was not a mere bit of feminine emotionalism that moved me, but the vibration of a chord to which is attuned all that is simple, and natural, and best in the human heart; and that what I felt everyone who saw the picture felt too—all the numberless thousands that throng the moving picture theaters throughout the world. And when I couldn't get home fast enough to send my mother a present and write her the longest letter I'd written in years, I knew that I was companioned by a vast company, and that not only my mother's heart was to be gladdened by a proof of remembrance, a recognition of her love and care, but that of thousands of other mothers, many of whom doubtless felt lonely, useless and forsaken.

In no other way could such numbers have been reached, in no other way could such a lesson have been taught a busy, self-engrossed world, in no other way could so much happiness have been given to those who deserve it most.

And thus we see that the screen writer may possess a power such as no artist has ever had before, a power not only to amuse and entertain, but to teach, and to help, and to arouse all that is best in mankind. And it is for this reason, as well as for the financial rewards, and the very real fascination of the game itself, that I am writing Photoplays.



"The Public Wants—"

By F. Clair Roche

What does the public want—that oft repeated cry,
The writer of the day says his creation
Is what the public wants, in pictured plot and style,
They'll throng to see my tale of love and passion.

I feel the public pulse—the famed producer cries,
A girl's pure heart—a lover's adoration;
The pulse is felt—the nightly throng scan lithographs, then pass along
He felt the public pulse and then, he lost it.

What does the public want—we'll ask the public that,
Replies are many, filled with variation;
We want—the public wants a play, of passion grand, of country jay,
The public wants—not what it wants—and wants it.



THE student of screen drama who resents honest criticism will never progress far along the road to success. Despite what you may think, your first efforts in photoplay writing are not going to be masterpieces.



IF you wish to learn whether or not the public observes the writer's name upon a picture play, foist upon it a poorly done piece of work. The ensuing "roar" will end forever any doubts you may have as to the importance of the author.

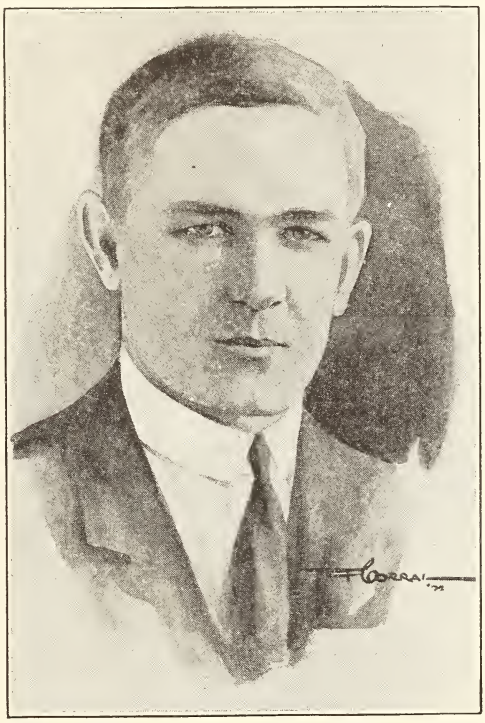
"Don't Blame the Editor if Your Scenario Comes Home"

Says Bryan Irvine

HOW many times have you heard this remark from one who writes and writes and cannot sell what he writes? "The only reason my work fails to get on the screen is because it is read and passed upon by some scenario editor or two-by-four reader who has no creative ability himself and, therefore, does not know a good story when he reads it."

Or again from the same source: "If the scenario editor or reader who rejects my story has never written or sold anything himself, how can he be a competent judge of my work?"

The answer to these questions is so palpably obvious that to discuss the point seems almost absurd. Yet the question is repeatedly asked by thousands who write or try to write for the screen. No doubt there are other thousands who do not come out openly and "holler their heads off" about this imaginative injustice, but continue to pound away at the old typewriter and accept the condition as one of the painful handicaps of unrecognized genius.



Bryan Irvine is considered one of the best judges of scenarios at the Ince Studios. He is also a gifted photoplaywright, having achieved his present high position in the motion picture world by virtue of his many successful screen dramas.

So let's argue the point a bit.

First, how many magazine editors are or have been authors? Not so many. It is a peculiar fact that the best magazine editors have never written fiction. Who, for instance? Well there is Bob Davis, for many years editor-in-chief of the Munsey Publications. Looking over a long list of well-known—even famous—fiction writers of today we find dozens who were "found" by Robert H. Davis. He had not the creative mind, but he knew when he read a contribution whether it was only words or a sure-enough story.

We could name many other magazine editors who frequently and unerringly pick winners from the army of embryo fictionists — editors who never wrote a story or, if they had written stories, could not sell them. The same thing is true of scenario editors.

A building inspector is not necessarily a bricklayer or a carpenter. Another simple but incontrovertable simile is that the small boy may not be a pastry cook, but he knows good apple pie when he tastes it. And I know scenario editors and humble readers who have never written a scenario and are wise enough not to try, who, when a good story drops on their desk, "eat it up," although I grant that most scenario editors come from the ranks of trained photoplaywrights.

After all there is little ground for argument. Who is the final judge of screen productions? Why, the great American movie-going public, and they or it, in spite of the fact that perhaps only one out of ten thousand knows anything

about the technical elements of a photoplay, cannot be fooled. The box-office tells the final story.

A scenario editor and his readers have merely made an exhaustive study of what is and what is not of screen value. A good photoplay must be a proper mixture of certain elements, just the same as cake must be made of certain portions of certain ingredients. Many a breakfast has been spoiled by too much or too little soda, or salt, or water, in the flapjack batter.

The scenario editor first looks for one —at least one—original or semi-original dramatic situation in a submitted story. All right, maybe the situation is there. Now, is this really good situation drifting helplessly about like a rudderless derelict in a sea of meaningless, though perhaps pretty, words and phrases? Often, unfortunately, very often, it is. What does the poor editor chap do then? He knows that it is a good situation all right, all right; but that's all there is to the story—just a good situation without head nor tail. He feels about the same as he did the time he put his last dollar in the jackpot on the poker table and held a four-card flush that refused to fill. Perhaps this editor is one of the best in the business but has never written or tried to write a story himself and has no inclination to write. If the situation is a good one he may pass the story on to a staff writer, trained in screen technique, who will attempt to dress it up in all the other essentials of a good story—love interest, conflict, suspense, heart interest and what not. But if the situation is merely a fair, conventional one, the editor throws up his hands, curses a bit, then puts it into a return envelope along with the printed slip that says "rejection does not necessarily imply lack of merit, etc., etc." That word "necessarily" on a rejection slip covers a multitude of sins.

Speaking of these all-important situations, the number of promising writers who apparently do not know what a situation is appalls one. I actually believe that many amateur writers unconsciously create good situations while amusing themselves with a long chain of incidents. Not long ago I read a very good original written by a lady in Colorado. She had pushed the story logically and quickly into a really good situation and carried it on step by step to a smashing climax, then quickly tapered it off to a nice ending. The lady, evidently fearing that her nice situation would "go over our heads," inclosed a letter with the script calling our attention to the situation, taking great pains to outline it fully in the letter so that it would not escape us when we read the script. But—the "big" situation she had outlined in her letter and was so afraid we would miss was not a situation at all; it was a very trivial incident in the story, had no bearing whatever on the main idea and would never have been missed had she forgotten to write. Still, she was banking on that incident—called a situation by her—to bring home a check. Apparently, she was blissfully ignorant of the fact that she had created a good situation in the story.

Regarding "Conflict"

By L. Hector Lucier

The public dearly loves a fight, and as long as there are two red-blooded men alive, I think a good fight will hold its appeal, in life and in drama.

The "struggle everlasting" will continue as long as life lasts. There are very few men who have success handed to them on a silver platter; the majority of us must struggle from the bottom of the ladder up. True, sometimes as we begin to get away from the bottom rungs the struggle is easier; but let us relax for a moment, and we are confronted with somebody trying to pass us on the ladder to Success, and again we must struggle to regain our position. Life without struggle would be drab and dreary. The public will always love a fight, be it mental or be it physical; but let there be the element of conflict, and it will be true to life.

'Situations Wanted' by Screen Actors

A Plea, Not for Employment, but for Real Suspense and Drama in the Photoplay

By Raymond Hatton

Each of us who have devoted years of study to our art—and every player of importance in the screen world must be included in that category—has definitely fixed in his mind the part, or type of part, he wants to play. Generally speaking, however, a part, or type of part, is too vague to allow a clear definition. When I think back over the roles I have created for the screen or when I consider such fiction as I am familiar with with a view to naming my favorite part, I find that my choice depends not upon the part as an entirety, but on the situations into which the character is thrown. It would seem, then, that a player can more definitely tell a writer what to give him for a vehicle, if he will name those situations that afford the greatest opportunity for dramatic expression.



His extreme versatility and ability to portray any part convincingly have made Raymond Hatton one of America's foremost character actors. His message to scenario writers is, therefore, authoritative and well worth heeding.

It seems to me that every situation of real worth to which I have contributed was one in which the player who is the center of interest is in a state of unusual suspense. The suspense of a character in a well written dramatic story holds the spectator in a similar state of suspense, that makes him susceptible to the slightest suggestion of the player. I know from my first-hand study of motion picture audiences that much subtlety of action that is lost in many scenes is vivid and forceful in a sequence of dramatic intensity.

Invariably, when I am asked, I say that the role of John Trimble in "The Whispering Chorus", one of the big successes in its day, was my favorite part,—that it afforded me a greater opportunity for such capabilities as I possess than any other screen role I have created. After a recent analysis of that role, I became further convinced that I reached my decision, unconsciously perhaps, because of the splendid dramatic situations in that part.

In suggesting to you, on whom we must depend for the photodramas of the future, the situations that appeal to the actor, I must refer to picture plays in which I have appeared. I must recite those scenes which have given me my greatest opportunities and let them hint at what I, and every other player, now want. I can do no more than offer a suggestion for, were it possible for me and other players to create such stories as the screen so badly needs, there would not be such a splendid field for writers of film stories as there now is.

A sequence of scenes in "The Whispering Chorus" occurs to me as the most powerful I have known in my own work, or in watching the efforts of others. Let me outline the situation: John Trimble,

a hunted man, is starving and is without funds. He is fishing for food that is an urgent need. He feels on his line a heavy pull which at first encourages him, but later shakes him with fear as he has difficulty in drawing to the bank what he knows is an inanimate object. The suspense of the character, as he struggles with the weight, which is bringing to him an inexplicable feeling of horror, arouses a sympathetic suspense in the audience that makes every spectator susceptible to the slightest suggestion of the player.

Trimble is horror-stricken as he finds that he has drawn to the surface a human body. Quickly, however, he regains his poise sufficiently to examine the corpse. He discovers that the man bears a remarkable resemblance to himself; he decides to change clothes with the body so that he, John Trimble, will be known as dead, and thus will have an opportunity to return to the world, free from the ever-threatening shadow of the law.

The beauty in that series of scenes to me lay in the fact that the original situation was so tense that the audience was brought right into the consciousness of the character, so thoroughly that it could follow his every thought. That sequence reached the screen without a subtitle, and I am vain enough to believe that the raciocinations of the character were clear to every one.

A situation, later in the same story, though not so effective as the former, was among the most forceful to which I have had the opportunity to contribute. John Trimble, after the series of incidents outlined above, is arrested and put on trial for his own murder. A character on trial for his life in any picture will pass through a series of incidents that are rich in chance for strong dramatic expression. But in this picture, the character was being torn between two equally fatal procedures: he must face trial for killing a man who still lives; or he must prove that man still lives and face the dire consequences of disclosing his own identity.

To specify further any definite scenes that have appealed to me would, in a sense, be to repeat. The two situations I have outlined are, in the same way that they are similar to each other, similar to those other scenes I have played that were richest in the occasion for dramatic expression.

Both scenes I have mentioned were dominated by the suspense of the chief character. In each case, the character was afforded a choice between two courses of action, both of which were obvious to the spectator. There is an opportunity for greater thrills, more melodrama, in a variation of these situations. The suspense of a character who is awaiting a known—or, for that matter, an unknown fate, when he has no possible means of escape, affords this chance; but such scenes are far easier to play. For in these scenes, the player has merely to project his terror or his anguish, and there is none of the subtlety in his work that is demanded when he must suggest to his audience, from the depths of his own thoughts and emotions, the varied thoughts that are passing through his mind.

If I have chosen to be a character actor, it is our filmplays that have forced the decision on me. I am an actor, first, and I crave the opportunity for self-expression that is foremost in every real "trouper." Our screen plays have thrown those situations which are worth while to character players—that is why an actor will tell you, as I do, that he wants to play "characters." He is like me in that he feels the eternal urge to place his advertisement in those columns which are headed: SITUATIONS WANTED.



WRITING is an art—which means that it is hard work.



CLEVERLY told incidents cannot bolster up a photoplay that is fundamentally weak. A false premise is much like a poor foundation; the superstructure, no matter how beautiful, or how well constructed, is liable to topple at any moment.

Principles of Photoplay Construction

By H. H. Van Loan

WHAT made the World War so fascinating to every human being? What made Peary's discovery of the North Pole such a remarkable achievement? Why did the early experiments of the Wright Brothers command the interest of civilization? Why do we manifest such interest in the death of the Pope or the birth of the lowly babe of Nazareth? Why do we prefer to weep when we know we would much rather laugh? Why is it we always pause to watch a train pass? Why does the public crowd the theatres and moving picture houses and ignore the churches?

The answer to all these questions and similar ones is, because the world loves melodrama. The World War was alluring because it was filled with melodrama. It thrilled the earth. Perry's discovery of the North Pole was very simple, and yet, a very great thing. It was a remarkable achievement. And yet, the North Pole has proved it is worthless, but, it also proved that man has wonderful endurance and can, with the aid of admirable persistency, overcome all obstacles in his desire to prove the existence of a certain thing. The experiments of the Wright Brothers with flying machines interested the whole world because man, up until that time, hadn't seemed ambitious to compete with the winged birds of the air. The element of risk was attached to all these achievements: the possibility of death. With quickening pulses and throbbing hearts, the people of the world read the tragic accounts of the World War, because it was real melodrama.



H. H. Van Loan's great success as a photoplaywright may be attributed largely to his almost uncanny ability to sense what the public wants. The accompanying article, which will be concluded in the April number, is worth careful study by every student of photo drama.

The world loves melodrama. It loves to experience the thrills which accompany action which seems to predict certain death. We are all sensational, and we revel in big, thrilling plots, intrigue, suspense and mystery. The World War played on every emotion known to the human race, and, while we stood back in horror and watched the great "super-special" being unreeled with terrified countenances, yet, in our hearts we enjoyed the big show. Why? Because all of us enjoy melodrama. Newspapers feature remarkable events in our daily lives on the front page because the editors know that the readers prefer to read stories which have the elements of suspense, mystery, and intrigue. The story of a remarkable murder is spread all over the front page and the sermon of the Rev. Josiah Jebbs is hidden away in some unnoticed cor-

ner on one of the back pages, because the public is morbid and sensational and would prefer to read a perfectly good melodrama that fall asleep over the religious eulogies of those who are trying to save its soul.

It's been so since the beginning of time, since the days of Eden, and it's going to remain that way just as long as there are people on the earth. We are all morbidly curious, and the craving for the sensational dominates our every word and action. We are always looking for the big thrill: the stuff that makes our blood tingle and raises goose-flesh along our gills.

"Give them melodrama!" This is the reply I always make when I am asked the question as to what the public wants, in the form of a story or photoplay. All right. Now then, what is melodrama? Melodrama is "yellow" drama. It's the stuff that has a big "kick" in it. It's the same sort of stuff that you will find smoothed all over the front page of your favorite newspaper today. It may be a story about the death of the Pope; perhaps it refers to the sensational escape of Roy Gardner, the "King of Bandits," or, again, it may discourse on the elopement of Tillie Teeds, the daughter of millionaire Teeds, the inventer of the pointless tack. Perhaps it relates to a poor Mexican family that lived twenty days without food, or a six-months-old baby killed by a motor car yesterday afternoon. It may be round most anything, but, whatever it is, you can rest assured it is melodrama.

The public reads the newspapers. The readers of the newspapers demand real melodrama and they just gloat over that which is enacted in real life every day. They enjoy the mystery, intrigue, and suspense; and that is why the editors of the newspapers feature such stories on the front page. The moment a mystery story is solved the public loses interest immediately.

The public loves melodrama in real life. It enjoys it because melodrama is natural. There is more melodrama in the world today than there has ever been before. There is a reason for it. People are more sentimental, emotional, and romantic today than they have ever been in the history of the world. Show me the man whose life has never contained an element of suspense, mystery, or intrigue and I will show you a million successful men whose lives have been crowded with more thrills and melodramatic situations than you will see on the screen during its life-time. Life is melodramatic. That is the answer. It is filled with startling situations and thrilling climaxes, and, when we desire to be amused we want to see something which mirrors life as we know it. This explains the success of "The Miracle Man," "Humoresque," and many other photoplays of the past year or two. They are melodramas.

The greatest stage or screen successes have been melodramas. Melodrama is the thing. Melodrama is what the public wants, and the writer who gives the public Melodrama is certain to find his writings will be enjoyed and there will be a demand for his work.

The Arizona Republican recently held a scenario contest, and, out of a list of about three hundred scenarios submitted only three were comedies, the rest were melodramas. Why? Because these stories were written by the public, and the public showed the trend of thought, and, that trend of thought was natural; it was melodramatic. There were a hundred different kinds of murder in those scripts! There were shootings, stabbings, duels, dynamitings, and every conceivable sort of crime was called into action in order to give somebody a legitimate excuse for annihilating someone else. There were a couple of excellent burned-at-the-stake-by-Indians plots. In fact, I must admit I don't know when I've witnessed such an excellent assortment of murders as were contained in those scripts. After reading some of them I rose and literally sponged the blood from my hands and I'd get into bed and pull the blankets over my head and then turn the light out.

The point I want to bring out is, that these stories were written by the public, and it revealed the trend of public thought. It proved to me that the mind of the public is running riot and apparently becoming demoralized. But greater than all else, it proved that life is one great melodrama, for, every one of those who submitted scripts in that contest admitted that they had based their story on real facts and that they had actually lived that particular experience themselves! Do you want any more proof that the public loves melodrama?

A great many writers think that melodrama consists of one or more killings and that in order to make a good story they must have a couple of first-class

murders. They are wrong. When they start to do that they are imitating Shakespeare. That is tragedy. Melodrama consists of equalized portions of romance, suspense, mystery, and intrigue, flavored with plenty of good snappy action. Then bring them all to a good thrilling climax and you've got a story. A series of situations will not make a story. Establish first a reason for the story and then embellish it with dramatic situations, plenty of action, pleasant surprises, and good romance. It is not necessary to kill someone in a story in order to make it a good story, and this does not constitute melodrama. It is possible to write a corking melodrama without demanding the sacrifice of a single individual.

The question is often asked, "What does the screen want? The screen wants good stories. A good story is always easily disposed of, and the producer will admit that all he ever asks is a good story. The producers are buying good stories and they will continue to buy them as long as they can find them. Tragedies are not very popular; farce comedies have a fair following, and there is always room for comedy-drama. But melodrama is always in demand, because it reflects life itself. The great successes of the stage and screen have been melodramas; mirored life, with its thrills, suspense, intrigues and startling climaxes.

It is true that people like to laugh, but, it is a fact that they prefer to cry. It is easier to make the public cry than it is to make it laugh. The writer who can make it laugh makes more money. And yet, it doesn't want to laugh long. It never gets tired of tears. The public is melodramatic; the world is melodramatic and that's why it likes to weep. The writer who can bring the tears to the eyes of the audience is in demand. The writer who can make it laugh a little and cry a little will be in great demand. The writer who can inspire laughter is the greatest writer of them all, because he has to do real big creative work. There isn't much laughter in real life. If you think there is, walk down the main thoroughfare of any big city, any day, and try and find something really humorous. On the other hand, note the many melodramas and tragedies on all sides as you pass.

There has always been a big demand for melodramas, because they are reflective of life itself, and, the audience whether it be a stage or screen audience, wants dramas which reproduce actualities. Melodrama reflects life: melodrama is life. Give the producers more of life, embellished with fiction and the producer will be happy.

(To be continued)



Photodrama

By W. S. Taylor

When first Daguerre found out that focused light
In cameras, would chemicals erase
And make the shaded picture of a face,
Photography, an Art, was born aright;
Like Rembrandt's paintings rare, in black and white,
Fine portraits, showing skill, soon took their place
And vivid views of beauty and of grace,
Were visualized to please the public sight.
Next was the Mimic Art with it combined,
And motion pictures, scenes with action rife
By actors shown, realistic, true to life,
In dramas, written each by master mind;
Creating thus a double art to treasure,
The Photodrama—source of joy and pleasure.

THE BEAUTY of the world is caught and thrown upon the screen—a sweep of the desert mesa, the hills dark against the sky—a young orchard in bloom, blowing in the wind—a great moon with the eucalypti of California dark against its silver—the great stretch of the sea, and the fog swirling in to the land.

IN THE FOREGROUND

Being a Department of Brief Chats on Topics Within The Camera's Range

"Movie" Morals

THE bitter campaign against "the movies," which was started and is being carried on by certain publicity-seeking fanatics and demagogues, seems to have been given added impetus by the shocking murder of William D. Taylor, one of filmland's prominent directors.

Just why, considering the astonishing number of violent deaths in all walks of life during recent months, the killing of Mr. Taylor should be used as an argument against motion pictures, is hard to fathom; especially as, at the present writing, there seems to be no definite clew to the murderer or any occurrence connected with the crime that could possibly be used as a basis for accusing the unfortunate victim or his friends of being vicious or immoral.

Such expressions as "dope ridden," "degenerates," "painted butterflies," and "criminal morons," which have been openly applied to Hollywood and its some 60,000 residents by certain speakers and publications during the past few weeks are not only gross untruths, but are libelous in the extreme; and could be the product only of minds that are themselves depraved, utterly ignorant, or blindly prejudiced.

Those who live in Hollywood, or who have visited that beautiful community long enough to gain an insight into actual conditions, know that its residents are no worse than persons in any place of similar size—probably better. Even the evangelist, "Billy" Sunday—admittedly caustic in his condemnation of amusements that most persons consider harmless—stated, in a recent article in Screenland Magazine, that for each dissipated person in the film studios there are a hundred who work hard, spend their evenings with their families, and are sturdy citizens in every sense of the word. Surely, this ratio is better than any average community or profession can boast; and, knowing this, it is hard for sincere members of the screen world to remain silent in the face of the bitter invectives that have been hurled at them by the ill-advised, nasty-minded orators and writers who rushed into the lime-light immediately following the Taylor tragedy.

In fact, the motion picture profession does not intend to remain silent much longer. At recent mass-meetings held in Hollywood steps were taken to combat the vitriolic publicity that has been directed at film folk and their profession, and readers of *The Photodramatist* may rest assured that, if the program as outlined is followed, there will be some plaintive wails from certain "anti-movie" quarters within a short time.

Possibly it has not occurred to some of the attackers of "the movies" that the publication or utterance of malicious untruths—of statements and opinions that cannot be proved, but which can do injury to the person, or profession, at which they are hurled—constitutes criminal libel; and that there are laws which make any person, or publication, issuing such statements liable to arrest and imprisonment.

Should a number of newspaper editors, writers and public men who have been so free with their denunciation of the film colony be required to prove even a fraction of what they have said regarding Hollywood and its motion picture folk during the past few weeks, they will be sadly chagrined people indeed. Possibly, however, a stiff fine and a term in prison might be beneficial to certain of these persons, in that it would give them opportunity to think—an art most of them seem to have long since lost.

Concerning Friends

SOMEONE has remarked quite aptly that our worse enemies are often our best friends. Nothing could be more true than this seeming paradox. It is our enemies who, although sometimes unjust, point out to us our many faults, and keep us from becoming settled in the rut of self-satisfaction.

Just so, the photoplay writer who depends upon his "friends" for criticism and advice on his screen dramas is due for a sorry tumble. A real friend, of course, should tell one the truth, but how few real friends there are in the world. As a general rule, one's social acquaintances, no matter how intimate, will smilingly indulge in the grossest lies rather than hurt the feelings of one who comes to

them for advice; or else will be so blinded to the defects of the person they admire, that they will be incapable of giving an impartial comment upon anything that such a person may do.

Of course there is a reason for this. The average photoplaywright who places his latest effort in the hands of a friend and asks him to "give me your candid advice," does not wish candid advice at all. He wishes merely to be told that he is a wonderful writer and has turned out a masterpiece; and if the friend in question should presume to point out any glaring defects in the work at hand, the writer would stalk away highly indignant and the basis for an enmity would probably have been laid.

On the whole, it is best to avoid both friends and enemies in obtaining criticism on your photoplays. Although it is to be granted that competent, unbiased judges are often hard to find, and that the best of them have a disconcerting habit of charging hard cash for their opinions, such critics are the only ones who will give the aspiring screen dramatist really constructive aid and help him along the path to permanent success.

What Do They Want?

THE editor of *The Photodramaist* is repeatedly asked the question: "What type of photoplay is most easily marketed?" And since this is undoubtedly a matter of vital interest to every screen dramatist, a few words on the subject might not be amiss at this time.

It can safely be said, of course, that any "big" story—any scenario based on a vital theme, and which treats new ideas in a novel and workmanlike manner—is certain to find a producer. However, that is a statement somewhat general in its scope, and the average scenarist desires more definite information.

The type of photoplay most easily sold at this time is the comedy-drama, or society drama, in which the lead may be played by an ingenue. There are some forty producing units at present which are starring young actresses of from eighteen to twenty-five years of age; and since these stars appear in from six to twelve pictures annually, it can readily be seen that the producers must purchase a large number of scripts for them. We venture to say that no well constructed ingenue-lead story will pass through many hands, these days, before finding a buyer.

Virile dramas, or comedy-dramas, for young male stars are next in importance as selling possibilities. With twenty-seven companies producing plays of this type, it is apparent at a glance that the ambitious writer has that number of markets for any young male lead photoplay he offers—provided, of course, it has been properly written and is worth filming.

The well-done "western" drama is equally certain to find a purchaser. Despite the cry that arises from time to time that the day of western pictures is ended, the fact remains that fifteen or more films of this type are released monthly—and that they are generally successful. The wise photodramatist, however, will steer clear of the conventional, trite themes, characters, and situations in writing such photoplays. If he wishes to sell them, they must be "different"—which means that the hero who "shoots up" a saloon, evades the crooked sheriff and marries the beautiful, and ever innocent, dance-hall girl is a thing of the past, and that as much care must be taken in plotting and constructing a film play of this sort as with stories of any other classification.

Emotional dramas, for male or female lead, while always tempting to the photoplaywright as subject matter, are exceedingly difficult to dispose of. There are but two or three actresses in pictures today who can handle a role of this type, and an equally limited number of actors. There is also the danger, when writing emotional, heavy drama, that the screen dramatist will introduce censorable, objectionable material. Indeed, the writing of heavy drama without bringing in the sordid incidents, is one of the most difficult tasks encountered in the art of photodrama.

All-star stories and farce-comedies for male or female lead are purchased from time to time by various companies; but farce-comedy is an exceedingly hard type of story to write—to suit producers, at least—and, in spite of the number of successful all-star pictures that have been released, the photoplay that embodies an outstanding leading role is by far the best selling possibility.

The Price of Success

PHOTOPLAY writers are not immune from the periods of depression that come to every sincere artist. Generally over-optimistic at the start—believing that fame is easy of attainment and that screen drama may be mastered with small effort—the aspiring scenarist is inevitably chagrined and discouraged when his first offerings are rejected by the producer.

As a rule, following the failure of his maiden effort, he will stop studying and working, and, in an outburst of self-pity, declare that there

is no chance for him as a scenario writer, that the film world does not want worthwhile stories, and that he is **through.** Of course, he is not through,—if he has the real qualities of success within him. He is, in fact, only beginning; and when he has studied more and spent more time in the practice of photoplay writing, he will probably laugh at his first discouragements and wonder at the shortsightedness which prompted him to believe that his crudely done, early efforts contained merit.

It is impossible to stifle a true artist with a few rejection slips. Indeed, these same rejections often have a very salutary effect; for they teach the student scenarist what **not** to write, and force him to spend more time in preparation for his ultimate vocation. All the technical training in the world—indispensable as it may be—is valueless without the added lessons that can be learned only from experience.

The editor of *The Photodramatist* realizes that creative artists are bound to be more or less emotional during periods of discouragement, and that it is asking much to request that they sit down and view their work in the light of pitiless truth. Nevertheless, that is exactly what every photoplay writer, at some time in his career, must do. He must, figuratively speaking, draw up a set of books, in which he must balance the advantages and disadvantages of his chosen profession. In doing so, he must set down the price of payment as well as the reward he expects to gain. This price may at times seem high. The optimistic student is reluctant to admit that he will have to spend many months—possibly years—at difficult mental labor. But if he is fair with himself and others, he must also admit that the article he is buying with this self-sacrifice—artistic and financial success—is worth fully what it costs.

Minor Characters

FREQUENTLY the question arises: "How much time, should I devote to the delineation of minor characters in my photodramas?" This is a query not so easily answered as might appear at first glance. As a matter of fact, in one sense of the word, there is no such thing in screen drama as a "minor" character. By this I mean that any character worth introducing into a photoplay is worth the careful attention of the writer. It is natural, of course, that the leading character should be "played up" more prominently than any other person of the play, since the action—if the story is properly constructed—will center about him or her, and his or her struggle. However, this same action, in its relation to the major character, will appear plausible and convincing only when properly motivated; and it will not be properly motivated unless the other characters appeal to the spectator as real human beings and are carefully visualized and developed. This is one of the big differences between the great play and the near-great. It is to be regretted that in many instances the egotism of certain stars has resulted in a weakening of the characters surrounding them in their dramatic vehicles, and has not only lessened the appeal of the story, but has also proved more or less of a boomerang to the self-centered actor himself, since the public cares little for the "footage" devoted to Mr. Star but, rather, judges a picture as a whole.



AS IN LIFE, the future is but the past entered through another gate, so in your story should one incident grow from that preceding.



Chicago Contest Decision Delayed

Although the Photodramatist had expected to announce in the present issue the winners of the Chicago Daily News scenario contest, no decision had been reached at the time this magazine went to press. Advice from Chicago indicates that the exceptional merit of the photoplays which, by process of elimination, have been passed up to the final judges makes selection of the winners an exceedingly difficult task. The editor believes, however, that the names of the fortunate screen writers will be available in time for publication in the April number.

"How Did Sarah Dress Her Hair?"

Accuracy of Detail Now Demanded by Public Brings Scientists to Aid of Producers

By Edgar J. Banks, Ph. D.

RECENTLY in one of the largest of the New York theatres, I saw thrown upon the screen a reproduction of one of Solomon's buildings at Jerusalem. The construction of that particular building is fairly well known to archaeologists, and I was surprised to see that its walls were decorated with glazed lions taken from the walls of the palace of Nebuchadnezzar at Babylon. The heroine of the story was a character whose traditional name is well known, but in the play she bore a name far less picturesque. The city where she lived was in the interior of Southern Arabia, but it was placed on the sea coast of Persia. The heroine lived about 1000 B. C. but she was made the contemporary of a character who lived 600 years later and of another who lived a thousand years after she was dead. There was hardly a detail in the picture which would not be criticized by the Orientalist.



When the University of Chicago needed a leader for its Babylonian Research Expedition, it selected the author of this article, who is one of the world's foremost archaeologists. He is now employing his vast technical knowledge as research director for Sacred Films, Inc.

In another well known picture, the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, has been reproduced. This palace has been thoroughly excavated and the details of its architecture are familiar. In the picture the great throne room was decorated with immense columns and with elephants. But the throne room had no columns and never has an elephant appeared in Babylonian sculpture. The only representation of an elephant in Assyrian or Babylonian art was one which was brought in payment of tribute to Assyria.

One day not long ago, the director of a motion picture concern in California was talking with a clergyman who had been called in for advice. The picture to be made for the screen was a portrayal of the life of Abraham at Ur of the Chaldees, his marriage to Sarah, and his migration to Palestine. The clergyman had been called in to answer all questions regarding the customs of the times—what the people ate, what they wore, in what kind of houses they lived, and a thousand other questions which a clergyman is supposed to be able to answer. No efforts were to be spared to make the picture historically perfect in all details. The director asked:

"How did Sarah dress her hair?"

The clergyman thought hard and knit his brow. The difficulties of his task began to appear. He repeated the question to himself, "How did Sarah dress her hair?," but that did not answer it. Finally he shook his head and answered:

"I don't know, but I know someone who does."

It was then that I received a telegram to come to California to tell how Sarah dressed her hair. It happens that some

years ago, I was sent to Babylonia by the University of Chicago to search among the ruins of the buried cities. The ruin selected for excavation was that of a city which flourished at the time that Abraham lived. The city of Ur was located in a part of the desert which is now overrun by the most hostile of the Arab tribes. Its ruins have been seen by very few white men. Some years ago I visited the place. I walked about the city on the summit of its walls, climbed to the summit of the temple tower, carefully traced the streets in which Abraham must have played when he was a boy. Therefore, it was a simple thing to make a miniature of the city, to locate the temple, to show the canal, the residential quarters and the market place. Should Abraham himself come back he would recognize the miniature as that of his home. There was little difficulty in reconstructing the details, as for example, the temple with its different stages, the statues which adorned it, the moon god in the shrine at the summit, the altar, the votive stone vases and tablets. They were all reproduced from objects found in the ruins from Abraham's time. The only perfect house coming from the time of Abraham ever discovered was at Ur; it was a square structure with a flat roof still intact. In the ruins of the house were furnishings, and beneath the floors were the clay tablets or written documents of that age. There were little household images which the people worshipped, the toys, and even the rattles with which the babies played.

But how did Sarah dress her hair? In the ruin of Tello, another Babylonian city from the time of Abraham, there was found a large black diorite statue of a female. The hair was done up in a psyche knot at the back of the head and held in place by a bandeau over her forehead. The costume was a loose undergarment, above which was a gown almost modern in its shape. It was also easy to deck out Sarah with the jewelry of her time. It used to be my special work when the graves were opened to gather up the dust into which the body had turned and sift it thru my fingers to rescue the jewelry buried with the dead. There were bronze ear rings, finger rings, armlets, anklets, and beads of various stones and shapes. The most striking adornment worn by the women was a long thin piece of gold, bound upon the forehead. It is almost certain that Sarah adorned herself with such an ornament.

It is very evident that people are beginning to desire greater accuracy in the settings of the pictures which are thrown upon the screen. The educational value is increased or diminished according to it. Should the architecture, and costumes and street scenes be wrong, the value of the picture as an educational factor, is less than nothing for it is difficult to eradicate false impressions. On the other hand, if the details are correct, there is imparted to the public a lesson in history, in architecture, in ancient social and business life, and in the evolution of civilization, which can be gained in no other way.

The science of archaeology is still young. Not many years ago it was generally conceded that the man who devoted his life to things of the remote past was as dry and fossilized as the objects he studied. But now it is different. The study of things ancient has become a science demanding universal respect. Not yet has the public become interested in ancient life and history, but when it is realized that the pictures on the screen are really accurate, public interest will not be wanting. To me it is an exceeding great privilege to assist in popularizing a most fascinating study, which cannot fail to broaden the mental horizon of those who have not been able to receive the benefits of a liberal education. And this important service can be rendered best by the accurate motion picture.



CONVERSATION is the art of keeping off the subject. Plot building is the art of keeping on the subject.

FLIRTATION has been defined as attention without intention. This might be applied to the way some folk approach photoplay writing.

The Elements of Dramatic Art

By George Wallace Sayre

RARE is the human being who has never felt an impulse to pretend he is someone or something else. The human being who has never felt pleasure in seeing such pretending is rarer still. Back through the ages of barbarism and civilization, in all tongues, we find this instinctive pleasure in the imitative action that is the very essence of all drama.

The instinct to impersonate produces the actor; the desire to provide pleasure by impersonations produces the dramatist; the desire to provide this pleasure with adequate characterization and plot, memorable in itself produces dramatic literature.

Though dramatic literature has been sporadic, dramatic entertainment by imitative action has been going steadily on since we first heard of it in connection with the Bacchic festivals of early Greece; and the dramatic instinct has been uninterruptedly alive since man's creation. We do not kill the drama, we do not really limit its appeal by failing to encourage the best in it; but we do thereby foster the weakest and poorest elements.

What is drama? Broadly speaking, it is whatever by imitative action rouses interest or gives pleasure. The earliest of the mediaeval plays, the trope of the church in which the three Mary's go to the tomb to find that Christ has risen, and make their way thence rejoicing, does not differentiate one Mary from another. The words, which were given to music, have only an expository value. Here, as through the ages succeeding, it is action and theme which count.

Goethe, Schiller, Hugo, Dumas père, and Alfred de Vigny revealed a new world of dramatic romance and history. But are the dramatists of today keeping trend with those whose laurels are written down in history as the foremost in their art? Why is it, then, that out of the masses of photoplays put before the present-day public, only a few, such a very few in comparison to the hundreds made, live only once? Is it that the dramatists of today are getting so trite that they cannot originate more photoplays that mirror life by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, or a confessor predict the progress of the passions?

The public is very exacting in its demands, a hard task-master. To try to hit public taste in the photoplay is like trying to hit the bull's-eye of a rapidly shifting target on a foggy day. Yet there is a widespread interest of the people at large, and men and women all over the country are busied with the difficult art of the Photodramatist. In turn, responsive to their needs, our colleges are developing courses in dramatic composition and photoplay writing is now being taught by correspondence.

> **"From the Beginning**
>
> **man has sought various means of expressing his inherent desires," says Mr. Sayre, in this unusual analysis of the drama. "The photoplay," he adds, "is the most perfect medium yet designed for the gratification of this fundamental instinct."**

To every dramatist comes sooner or later the question: 'Shall I write so as surely to make money, pandering to the artistic and moral taste of my public; or shall I keep to my inculcated and self-discovered standards of dramatic art till I win my public to them?" For the latter result there must be a considerable part of the public which so understands and loves the best of the drama that it can quickly discover promise in the drama today. Out of the past come the standards for judging the present; standards in turn to be shaped by the practice of present-day photodramatists into broader standards for the next generation. The photodrama possesses a great literature growing out of an eternal desire of the race. The photodrama is a great revealer of life. Potentially, it is a social educative force of the

greatest possibilities, provided it be properly handled. You cannot annihilate it. Repressing it you bring its poorer qualities to the front.

Shakespeare, who, above all writers, at least above all modern writers, holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life, should be studied earnestly by every screen writer. His Characters are not modified by the customs of particular places; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions; they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other dramatists a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species. But Shakespeare is immortal, he has given to the world at large drama that will last down the ages. His influence will yet mark the photodrama.

I believe that the greatest theme of photoplays is the love theme, and that the success of numerous plays embodying this theme will prove out the statement. On every stage, in both reel and real life, the universal agent is Love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a girl, and a rival into the story; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture and part in agony, to fill their mouths with joy and outrageous sorrow, to distress them, to deliver them—is the business if the dramatist.

One cannot please all the people all of the time, but we can please most of the people most of the time. We shall always have our long-haired critics who will lament upon the photoplay, no matter to what artistic heights it may rise; but if we can tend to divert and entertain, and at the same time to instruct and improve the minds of the youth of both sexes; if we can set forth in the most exemplary lights, the parental, the filial, and the social duties; if we can paint vice in its proper colors to make it deservedly odious; and set virtue in its own amiable light, and make it look lovely; if we can draw characters with justness and support them distinctly; and if we can put all these good ends in so probable, so natural, so lively a manner, as shall engage the emotions of every sensible theatergoer, then will we be more than able to also please that "few" of the public, and please them well.



Thought

By C. E. J. Widgery

Night is the time to think
When from the eyes the soul
Takes flight, and, on the utmost brink
Of yonder starry pole,
Discerns beyond the deep abyss of night
The dawn of uncreated light.



"A Camera Has No Ears"

To "Get Over" Your Photoplay Must be Told in Terms of Action Only

By Alvin Wyckoff

THE question often arises, "Is it necessary for the cinematographer to know the story?" I say, "Yes, positively." And if he is a man who understands his business and is looking for success, he will insist on knowing the story intimately, not only in its original form, but in every change that takes place in it thereafter.

The author should try to cultivate the friendship of the cinematographer much more than is being done, for unless the story is very carefully handled after it leaves the author's hands and mind, little of his meaning is going to get over to the spectator. When I say, 'author', I mean that writer who puts his heart into his work, and not the so-called writer who is fed up on worthless egotism and is forever worshipping the dollar he is going to get for his result.

The author is seldom versed in the photographic mysteries, and so needs a little guiding here and there in order to make his story run smoother. For instance, what can be less entertaining than a scene between two or more people that sit, and stand, and look at each other, and speak a lot of magnificent lines filled with much oratory that is lost?

The camera has no ears! Therefore the spectator is forced to sit and look at a lot of footage that is absolutely devoid of interest or telling action, which is nothing more than the wagging of a lot of mouths, and utterly meaningless. It thus becomes necessary for the audience to labor through a lot of titles that are not entertaining, because there is no action to stimulate the imagination. On the other hand, the same idea could be put over much more convincingly with "action," with perhaps a dissolve or a vision, or a split screen, or numerous other tricks that are known to the cinematographer.



Alvin Wyckoff has "shot" probably more feature pictures than any cinematographer in the film world. His advice is constantly sought by writers at the Lasky Studios, for whom he is chief cameraman. What he has to say in these pages is worth careful consideration.

Photography is the author's carriage for conveying his idea to the audience, so why should he not be a little more interested than usual in what the cinematographer is going to do? Certainly, the author expects to write more than one story, and he should expect to make each one better than the one before. Then why neglect the vehicle that is going to carry it?

There was a time, and not so many years ago, when the directors had to write their own stories over night and "shoot" them the next day. And some of them were very good. Why? Because the director knew, with the author's knowledge, the ideas he wanted to get over, so he and his cameraman were continually conferring as to the best methods of putting these ideas over. Now, we have the author work-

(Continued on page 40)

Real Stories for the Two-Reeler

By Frank R. Conklin, Scenario Editor, Christie Film Co.



Frank R. Conklin

A RECENT article in *The Photodramatist* by Harry R. Brand gave an interesting insight into the making of the slapstick comedy, but Mr. Brand erred in this respect — that he gave one the general impression that all moving picture comedies are based on "gags" and distinguished by lack of plot.

This is all very well for one branch of the high comedy art, and good slapstick is art in itself which is attained by few comedians; but its limitations are seen in the fact that there has come up in the last few years a type of comedy which is based entirely on story.

In other words, the producer tries to "pack an awful lot of plot" into two reels, or more exactly, into about 1750 feet, including titles—for many of our best two-reel films do not exceed these limits.

I wish I could draw you a picture of our busy scenario staff, reading each and every scenario which is addressed to our company, eagerly trying to find a comedy with a new plot—and with enough plot to make an interesting and amusing two-reel story. Our wail forever is that ninety-nine out of a hundred of these submitted stories are but incidents, or bare ideas, which, photographed, would deserve no more than a hundred and fifty feet of film.

As scenario editor, I have ideas myself, lots of them. What I should like to have is the "working out" of one, or a new way to work out an old idea.

Al. Christie is one of the few comedy producers, who will consistently throw out a laugh in order to stick to a story, if it is a case of losing one or the other. This is just the reverse of the slapstick method, where the story is sacrificed for the laugh—however far-fetched in probability.

Of course, Mr. Christie goes on the theory that if the story is amusing enough as a whole, the laughs or the chuckles or the smiles or whatever they are, will take care of themselves.

"Don't try to be funny!" is one of his pet maxims, explained by the fact that if the situation is amusing, a typical "comedy" grimace will not help the action but harm it.

In other words, a "funny" set of whiskers will not make a two reel comedy, but if the plot calls for the proper use of a misplaced whisker, use the whisker but forget all about it and do what it says in the script.

This calls to mind one of the many things which the chance visitor to the studio marvels at, and that is the fact that the comedy director (of the type of which I am speaking) works with a scenario. The visitor exclaims, "Why, I always supposed you just took the actors out somewhere and then thought up something funny to do," and he is stricken dumb with amazement when he sees a leather-bound volume of perhaps as many as two hundred scenes, all ready for filming.

As far as the light comedy people are concerned, the days of the backyard comedies are about over; which means that you now have to have about as good a technical staff and camera staff as any feature company, and most important of all, you require a *real story* of real people.

Be human, because it is the "human interest stuff" which counts nowadays.

Those of us who are engaged in furnishing two reels, or twenty minutes of light entertainment, in the best theatres everywhere are naturally very proud of our connection, and we are determined to make our fourth of the average film program hold its own from a standpoint of "class production". If we are to keep on doing that we must discard the old worn-out comedy props and give the theatregoer something new in comedy. Whether it is slapstick or polite comedy, it is the new idea which will hold them the twenty minutes.

But it has to be a story!

"What's All the Shootin' For?"

By Violet Clark

THERE'S an old saying that where there's smoke, there must be fire, and there is a parallel truism that when there is a shot, there must be a target. In other words, nobody can deny that all good little scenario writers should be striving toward some end, and every story should be aimed at a target other than just the check at the end of the last reel.

But what *is* that target? In the language of the Broadway popular travesty, "What's all the shootin' for?"

First the story, or scenario, which is the shotgun used for shooting.

Did you ever have anyone pounce out upon you suddenly from a dark corner and demand, "Just what *is* a scenario?" There is no question which leaves you so absolutely flat and at a loss.

A few weeks ago I received a letter from a friend in Chicago in which she mentioned in an offhand manner that school being out and not having much to do, she thought she might come out to California and do a little writing for the pictures. She remarked, not very complimentarily that if her friends could get away with it, she thought she could too, because she had gotten A in English last year at the University and she had done a little newspaper work which the editor pronounced without hesitation, "Fine!" She concluded with the request that I write her at once and tell her frankly "just what *is* a scenario or 'continuity' ", so she could sit down and write one.

It was with great difficulty that I restrained myself from seizing a postal card and by return mail giving her some such insanely fictitious information as "a continuity is something which a scenario editor demands, a director doesn't want, the leading lady never sees, the prop man can't read, and the assistant always loses,"—and with this description advising her to go ahead and do her worst, which she probably would do anyway.

But when you come down to plain facts, a great many people in the motion picture industry, including many scenario writers themselves, have just about the same idea of a scenario. And a great many people have somewhat the same confused impression of the picture when it's finished. There is no real idea of what all the shooting's for. The scenario writer writes because he's been told to put a story into continuity. The director goes upon the set and "shoots." And Mr. Public is branded as a Crank when he sees the picture, walks out of the theatre, and dares to inquire plaintively, "What's it all about? What's accomplished? What's all the shootin' for?"

Of course it is not possible for every picture to have a theme as big as the "Miracle Man", or the "Old Nest". But it *should* be possible to inject into every one a little more of backbone than merely a few passionate love scenes, or a camel on the desert.

It is true that the desire to entertain, and also to point out certain truths, are legitimate targets. But the spectacular element will not carry on alone, neither will artificiality, however artistic it may be.

Many writers, especially beginners, have learned and are learning through bitter experience that the most expensive and elaborately-developed picture is not the most successful. A common theme, the human touch, an entertaining sense of humour, are targets which create much more logical reasons for shooting. And it is up to those of us who prepare the shotgun, to see that it is aimed straight at the bulls-eye.

Although a new writer is not always able to take matters into his own hands, and material is placed before him and he must work on it whether he sympathizes with it or not,—there is always something which he can do to help. It is my

To Achieve Success

a photoplay must be based upon a vital theme—must convey a real message to the world," says Violet Clark, whose own success as a scenario writer is ample proof of the truths she sets forth in this interesting, and timely, article for aspiring photodramatists.

firm opinion that he who is going to linger longest in this merry little game of "put and take," is that writer who realizes that much of the responsibility of the tomorrow of the industry lies with him.

The subject of the future motion picture industry is a matter of popular discussion. Some wonder pessimistically if there will *be* a future. Will the drama of the screen die a natural death, its more and more hackneyed stories fading out into a merciful oblivion? Or will its salvation lie in the pictorially effective, perhaps the colored pictures? Or is it possible that the talking apparatus will return to create novelty? It is natural to assume that as the years pass by, the stories at hand will be exhausted. The seven original plots will be twisted and turned into seven times seven and seventy times seventy. New photographic effects will be invented. Perhaps continuity will be governed by a new technique.

But all of this will be purposeless, unless the pictures themselves revolve around a central basis from which the spokes of Life extend and unless the wheel moves upon the same ordinary ground that Everybody in this old world is compelled to tread.

In other words, the secret of making the photodrama secure is to make it deal with those things which *are* secure. Human impulse, every day problems, certain phases of comedy and sorrow are emotions which will never die. Thus anything which concerns these emotions will be always interesting.

If we all were only capable of taking the people whom we meet every day, walking in the ruts of their own lives and experiences, and lift these lives and experiences out of the rut just sufficiently to transfer them in an interesting manner to the screen—we would have achieved a target which could not help but endure. Rupert Hughes hit the mark in "Dangerous Curves Ahead", Rex Ingram and June Mathis in "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse", and Frances Marion in "Humoresque". Many of us are not quite prepared to do this, yet. Those who are discouraged and drop out, will *never* do it. Those who are sure that they recognize the need will do it as soon as they are ready, and the opportunity comes.

But the important fact is this—if there could be a common desire shared by all writers and would-be writers to deal with real people, to pull out of the rut, and aim at a target—there'd be no reason for ever worrying about "What's all the shootin' for?"



Photoplay

By W. Arthur Williams

Hopes, fears;
Smiles, tears:
Rising, subsiding;
Ever in motion;
Humanity riding
A fathomless ocean.



EVERYTHING in Life is cumulative. The little that you learn today, added to what you learned yesterday, and what you will tomorrow, will finally make you a master of your subject.

From Pen to Silversheet

By Melvin M. Riddle

IV—FILMLAND'S FASHION SHOP

ARTISTIC motion pictures call for characteristic settings and investture, perfect photography, appropriate costumes and beautiful gowns for the feminine star or principals. Hardly a picture is now produced which does not contain some scenes in which such feminine star or principals are shown elaborately and gorgeously gowned. Gowns and women's fashionable dress have become recognized as an attractive feature of any good picture, and the situation has now reached the point where milady never attends a motion picture show without taking close observation of the gowns, hats and other fashions worn by the feminine members of the cast. She has come to realize the care exercised in preparing these gowns, their exclusiveness of design and their originality of style.

Thus it is that that studio department which devotes itself to the creation and fabrication of women's fashions has become one of the most important; it is one of the most interesting and in the larger film plants, it presents a most convincing proof of the rapid strides which have been made in modern film production. The fashion department, as it may be termed, is much the same as any large dressmaking and designing establishment. It is complete within itself and operates under its own organization, synchronizing its work, of course, with the demands of the directors and players, as in the case of all other studio departments.

The fashion department of the Lasky studio is one of the largest and most striking examples of what constitutes a modern studio dressmaking branch. This organization, under the supervision of Ethel Chaffin, chief fashion designer for Paramount Pictures produced at the Lasky studio, occupies the entire second floor of the large concrete building, the lower floor of which, as mentioned in a previous article, contains the character wardrobe.

One hundred to a hundred and twenty-five girls and women are employed at all times and the gowns worn by all the principals and extras are designed and finished for use. Illustrative of the capacity of this unique department is the fact that three thousand gowns were designed and finished in the workrooms during 1920, for use in Paramount Pictures. This represents a daily average of about nine new gowns.

Motion Pictures Exert

a tremendous influence upon the styles of the American people. Mr. Riddle's "inside view" on the manner in which play-folk are gowned is certain to interest readers of The Photodramatist. Another article of this fascinating series will appear next month.

Five distinct branches comprise the fashion department. These are the dressmaking room, the stock rooms, the finished wardrobe, the millinery shop and the fancy costume shop. The stock rooms contain the materials to be used in the gowns, hats etc., the finished wardrobe is a long room filled with hangers, drawers and shelves wherein are stored and hung the finished gowns and hats and other fashion accessories, such as bags, shoes, furs, plumes, etc. In the dressmaking room are something like thirty or forty sewing machines operated by expert seamstresses; also a number of designers, cutters and fitters, who carry out the instructions of Mrs. Chaffin, the chief designer. In the millinery shop are the designers and makers of new styles in hats. Many pictures call for fancy costumes such as for a masque ball scene or period wardrobe. These are designed and made up in the fancy costume department. All of these separate branches are under the direct supervision of Mrs. Chaffin.

For almost every feminine principal in nearly every picture produced, several

gowns are necessary. This means a continual production of new and original designs, as no gown which has ever been worn previously by a principal can be worn by the same principal or any other principal in a later picture. The gowns, after being finished with by the principals in any one picture are remodelled and hung in the finished wardrobe to be assigned to extras in large ballroom and social scenes in later pictures. But even this stock must be disposed of after being used only a very few times.

One of the most talked-of sales in the history of feminine fashion was held recently at the Lasky fashion department and some three or four hundred gorgeous creations were sold to the public at ridiculously cheap prices. These had been used to their screen limit and although still in excellent condition—some them being almost brand new—they had to be disposed of as they were no longer available for screen use. This was a decided proof of the practicability and genuineness of the gowns which are designed and made up for Paramount Pictures. They could be worn in real life just as well and were made of the most beautiful and genuine materials.

A further example of the genuineness of these gowns as designed for use before the camera is the fabulous cost of some of the creations of this department. A gown worn by Gloria Swanson in her Paramount Picture, "The Great Moment," which contained thousands of pearls and a large strip of ermine, cost three thousand dollars. Another worn by Miss Swanson in the same picture—a negligee of black velvet—was valued at one thousand dollars. The Chinese costumes worn by Betty Compson in her first Paramount vehicle, from the play, "At the End of the World," represented an outlay of from three hundred to seven hundred dollars each.

All designs by Mrs. Chaffin are absolutely original. This is the only way to keep in advance of the style. It must be remembered that a picture is not released for the screen until about five or six months after its production. Therefore, the styles worn by the feminine players in the picture must be several months ahead, so that by the time the picture is released no worn-out styles will be seen in the new pictures. The gowns must also be absolutely appropriate for the characterization in the picture in question. They must be just as expensive or just as plain as the occasion demands.

Some months ago Mrs. Chaffin made a trip to Paris, Rome and London, for the purpose of looking over new materials and getting new advance ideas. The beneficial results of this trip are being seen in the gowns which the players are wearing in new Paramount Pictures, most of which gowns are of exquisite design and material. While abroad she secured many accessories, the majority of which will not be on the market for some months to come. One of these was a supply of monkey fur which she obtained after searching London and Paris and which is being seen as a gorgeous coat worn by Gloria Swanson in "The Husband's Trademark," an original photoplay written by Clara Beranger.

In making a gown, Mrs. Chaffin begins with the materials and a dress form. She drapes the materials about the form until she obtains a new and striking effect, then pins it in place and gives her instructions to her assistants. No pattern is made except in the case of tailored fashions. A pattern serves to spoil the originality of a gown, giving it a stiff and stereotyped appearance. The gown, after being cut and put together, is fitted to the player for whom it is intended, but so efficient has become the department that any altering is very rarely necessary.

The fashion department of the studio differs principally from any exclusive dressmaking establishment, only in the amount of time used in turning out a new creation. Where the average exclusive shop would take a week or more, Mrs. Chaffin and her staff will perfect a design and make the gown in a much shorter time, ranging all the way from several hours to two or three days. Speed in this as in other departments, is essential. The director must not be delayed by uncompleted gowns and they must be ready on schedule time. At the time this article was written, Mrs. Chaffin had orders for five new gowns for a well-known star, to be worn in a new picture. The time limit allowed her for the designing and completion of these five new gowns was about two days and she was just preparing to begin her work.



Gossip Street

From Hollywood Boulevard to Times Square



CAREY WILSON has recently sold to Goldwyn an original photoplay which bears the provocative title, "Women Love Diamonds." The story is said to introduce a new idea in scenario technique. Another original, "Captain Blackbird," a romance of the South Seas, was recently purchased by Goldwyn from the same author, who has ararrived from New York to join their scenario staff. Mr. Wilson has been writing for only a year and a half, but has already sold nine screen stories.

THE Louis Burston Company, Universal City, favor originals. Their first picture is starring Bessie Love and Gareth Hughes. The story is by Henry B. Symonds and John B. Clymer.

"FIGHTIN' MAD," an original by H. H. Van Loan, according to all reports, is going over big. It is the story of a cowboy, Buck McGraw, who rides like fury, fights like a demon, and loves like blazes.

THAT there is a widespread interest in photoplay writing is shown by the crowded houses which greeted H. H. Van Loan in San Diego, where he lectured on the principles of writing for the screen.

ONE OF the latest Pola Negri pictures is "The Last Payment," a story written expressly for this star by John Brennert and George Jacoby.

GEORGE FITZMAURICE will go to Egypt for the exterior scenes of his next picture, which is based on an original story by Ouida Bergere.

WILL PAYNE'S first original story written directly for the screen has recently been completed. It is called, "The Truthful Liar," and features Wanda Hawley. Mr. Payne came to motion pictures with the idea that the films were not proving sufficiently attractive to men; that the masculine theatergoers craved stories with a real live business background, all of which he endeavored to give them in this story.

AN original story by Jules Furthman, called, "In the Land of Beginning Again," is being produced by Fox.

"SKIN DEEP" is an original story by Marc Edmund Jones, which has been adapted to the screen by Lambert Hillyer. It is now being produced at the Ince Studios.

JOSEPH Franklin Poland has written a story for Eileen Percy, which is called "Elope if You Must."

"PETERMAN," the first screen story from the pen of America's prisoner-author, Louis Victor Eytinge, has recently been completed by Universal.

"TOP O' THE MORNIN'" an original story by Ann Caldwell, will be the next starring vehicle for Gladys Walton.

BELIEVING "Hail the Woman" to be one of the finest examples of photoplay plot composition and scenario construction produced during the past year, the educational department of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, Los Angeles, viewed this picture for the purpose of studying it. The party, numbering almost 200, included professional scenarists, studio editors, students of the Palmer Course, and members of the headquarter's staff.

"THE INDIAN DRUM," by Edwin Balmer, is a picture on which production will soon start at Ince Studios. Irvin Willat is writing the scenario. The story is founded on an Indian legend of Lake Michigan, and is said to very dramatic.

SOPHIE IRENE LOEB is writing a photoplay for Jackie Coogan.

"THE CAT THAT WALKED ALONE," is the intriguing title of a story by John Colton that is being filmed by Lasky's. It was adapted to the screen by Will M. Ritchey.

VIOLET CLARK has put over another original. "Conquer the Woman" is the name of the story. Katherine MacDonald will star in the picture.

FRANCES Marion wrote the script for "The Snowshoe Trail," Jane Novak's next starring production. The story is by Edison Marshall.

CECIL de Mille stated recently that after working on the production of "Saturday Night," an original by Jean MacPherson, he

(Continued on page 40)



Little Hints for Screen Writers

The editor will be pleased, at all times, to discuss on this page any problem which readers of The Photodramatist may suggest to him.

TO BE successful a photoplay must be logical and realistic. Consequently, motivation is one of the important fundamentals of screen drama. The poorly motivated story must inevitably be unconvincing. The law of "cause and effect" governs photodrama, just as it governs the world at large. To paraphrase a popular advertisement, "there must be a reason" for everything your characters do. It is well to remember, however, that motivation which is forced, or obvious, will defeat its own ends. Do not "drag in" incidents merely to bolster up an otherwise weak situation. Test each and every motivating incident by asking yourself not, "COULD such a thing happen?" but, "WOULD such a thing happen?" Many things which are possible are far from probable.

WHILE it is best, in molding screen characters, to exaggerate them slightly, by emphasizing certain traits upon which the drama might depend, never lose sight of the fact that they must appear to your audience as human beings. Even though you select a drab, commonplace person as your lead, be sure to endow him with sufficient "humanness" to make him appear REAL so that the spectator will be interested in following his career. The persons of the play must always be interesting although some of them may not be unusual in themselves. The motion picture in which the characters seem unreal, products of shadowland only, will not meet with public favor.

DON'T throw your rejected stories away. Oft-times, the discouraged photoplay writer, following repeated rejection of a cherished manuscript, will consign it to the fireplace as an impossibility upon which he wishes to waste no more time. Granting that he may be correct in this opinion, there is always the chance that the discarded scenario may contain material which, when the writer has had more training and experience, may be worked over and incorporated into a really successful screen drama. Poor indeed is the film story that does not possess at least one or two valuable bits of material; and, as often happens, there may be a "plot germ" lurking in the rejected filmplay of yours which, in the years to come, will well repay you for the labor spent in revamping it.

DEVELOP characterization, whenever possible, by letting the actions of your characters themselves give an insight into their ideals, general mental makeup, and attitude toward the world at large. For instance, a subtitle reading, "Hank Sloman, brutal foreman of the Bar-X Ranch," will not be nearly so convincing as a subtitle reading merely, "Hank Sloman, foreman of the Bar-X Ranch," supplemented by an opening "shot" of Hank himself in the act of kicking a puppy or whipping a jaded horse. In scenario writing, as in other professions, it is the little touches that count; and some very effective characterizations can be worked out by attention to small bits of action by members of the cast of your photoplay, when introduced into the drama.

THE wise photoplaywright will make no attempt to appeal directly to the emotions of his audience. At all times, any such appeal must be made indirectly through the characters of the picture itself. Let the audience gain emotional thrill from the reaction upon the actors of the situations in your story, and the drama will seem more realistic. Thrill gained by trickery—by deceiving the spectator—is bound to reflect unfavorably. The public likes to be fooled; but does not wish to be told, at the end of the story, that it "wasn't true, after all." Such an impression is bound to result, unless the spectators follow the plot through the eyes of one of the persons of the play.

Comment from Student Writers

A monthly department to which students are invited to contribute

"STORY" THE THING

By Allen Laughton

Many writers for magazines and newspaper reporters are constantly making fun of the ambitious student by such remarks as, "Your chance for becoming a screen writer is practically nil, for at least one half of the people in the United States are your competitors." And in the next paragraph they will praise a box office production with no story merit whatever.

Skilled directors are producing such plays because they lack a better story. The public, however, is getting tired of pretty stars and is demanding more C. Gardner Sullivans, who write from the heart, with both eyes on the story, oblivious to the box office, which will take care of itself if human nature is truly portrayed.

The student should not use a mediocre play as his model, but should analyze and detect its weak points, that he may convert that same weakness into a source of strength in the construction of his own play.

Aim high, and write a story that will stand unassisted by renowned stars, if you expect to walk in the sunny heights of achievement.

FACTS OR FICTION?

By Caroline Fisher Sawyer

In reading my January number of the Photodramatist, I was struck by a paragraph asking, "Why do so many young potential photodramatists chose as their first effort the story of their own lives?" I did not know that this was the case, but I think I can shed some light on the reason for it.

I have read many articles containing advice to young writers, and in nearly all of them I have found something like the following: "Don't write about foreign countries where you have never been. If you are rich, don't write about the poor. If you are poor, don't write about the rich. Stick to life, as you have seen it."

If one took this advice literally, what would happen? A conscientious beginner, anxious to profit by the words of wisdom falling from the pens of the successful, would naturally turn to his own life and expect to reap a rare harvest. The obvious question is: "How can we write, if we never write about our own lives and never write about imaginative fancies?" These are direct contradictions. Nevertheless, I think there is truth in both concepts; and it seems to me that if we take each piece of advice halfway we shall land somewhere. In other words, take facts out of life to build your story upon, but don't write a history of your life. Then embellish these facts with fiction. Build up and round out your story until it is a whole. Facts out of life are never, or rarely, complete stories and can always be improved upon. If you start out with something you really know about, you are more apt to draw your story to a logical conclusion. But don't be afraid to change your characters and make your situations truly dynamic.

WHY NOT NEW HORIZONS?

By Edward H. Hanigan

While watching the scene of the Argentine dance hall as shown in Metro's "Four Horsemen," I was lifted out of the humdrum into a foreign atmosphere. Here was a bit of life, new, entertaining, a touch of the unusual. I wonder how many of us know anything of the Argentine, save some vague school day ideas?

Why not, when writing, seek fresh fields? Why not emulate in a sensible way, Kipling, when he wrote of that new, unheard-of India of his; or that Frenchman, who discovered in a literary sense Siam and Japan? To blaze new trails, gain new fields, horizons, to acquire by every means in our power, intimate, interesting knowledge of strange peoples; to catch the picturesque and mirror it on the screen. Perhaps some of us know the every-day life of Andalusia, Portugal, or the white man's existence in say, the Andaman Isles? It is not so much a striving after the foreign, as a sure-to-good touch of the intimate, of things unusual and peoples out-of-the-common. It might be that an Old Mexico Sonora cock-pit would be a more alluring environment for your heroine or hero than the old seen-a-hundred-times small town barn.

Of course, I know it's not feasible for anyone to become a walking encyclopaedia of facts—which are useless! It does one little good to know that Chinese coolies fight fatal duels with their naked forefingers as stabbers; that—perhaps—Russians take their tea out of straws in tall glasses; or that cabs in Bombay have white roofs, or that Anne Boleyn possessed two little fingers on her left hand!

Yet, will not a sane seeking after the out-of-the-ordinary perhaps set one upon the broad pathway leading to success?

THE CHEERFUL PHOTOPLAY

By Evelyn E. Bowen

I cannot agree with the article on page eleven of the December Photodramatist, which states that the American love of cheerful photoplays with happy endings is the result of "racial decadence" or "spiritual cowardice." To my mind, it is the result of American optimism, the modern tendency to look persistently on the bright side of life. I consider it a fine characteristic of the nation—the same characteristic that won the war and made the American people what they are today. Is this cowardice? Rather, it is plain common sense—the spirit of eternal youth and hope, without which no life can be successful.

It seems to me that the happy ending often requires greater skill on the part of the author than the tragic ending. When you get your characters into a tight place, it is easy, of course, to let them die there; but is it not cleverer, and often just as artistic, to extricate them?



Photoplays in Review by the Staff



"Hail The Woman"

Reviewed by Mabel Odell

Comment: The story is founded upon a compelling theme—intolerance in a narrow-minded, New England community. Its appeal is universal, because it is a specific study of the present day attitude toward women in such environment. The characterizations directly embody this thought. There is Oliver Beresford, himself, the stern father and husband. He is "MAN," spelled in capitals, who by "divine right" sits at ease in the parlor while his wife and daughter scrub the kitchen floors. His only joy is in his son, and his only defeat comes when this son—whom he worships—turns out to be common clay.

Judith, the daughter, typifies youth and virtue. She can look beyond the forbidding horizon of Flint Hill, to "dream dreams" of better things. Fortified by her innocence, but defying meaningless conventions, she defies her father, finally, and goes forth into the world. Her mother, wistful, weakened from constant suppression, but inherently true, is more to be pitied than blamed. She is the victim of Puritan tyranny, and too old to break the chains that bind her.

Nan, the third character, exemplifies the endurance of woman for the sake of a loved child. Crushed in the maelstrom of life, she clings with grim determination to her baby, and eventually makes the supreme sacrifice.

The son, already mentioned, is not so weak a character as might be thought. He, too, is the victim of a vicious social system, and his father's attitude is largely to blame for the youth's outlook upon the world.

The drama leads logically from situation to situation, growing in power until the climax is attained. The judicious use of comedy-relief lends to its dramatic quality. Essentially, this is a human story—the kind that stirs the hearts of the audience—and if there were more like it there would be less criticism of the motion pictures.

Synopsis: Oliver Beresford, a pillar of the church in the little New Hampshire village of Flint Hill, is as harsh and unyielding as the soil from which he sprang. Secure in his self-righteousness, he rules his household with a rod of iron. His wife is a meek little soul, absolutely under his dominance. David, his son, on whom his ambition centers, has possibilities of real manhood, but he also bows to his father's will in all things and David is destined by his father for the foreign mission field. Judith, his daughter, is a splendid creature who longs for the education denied her by her father because she is a woman. Her father has planned that she marry a well-to-do young farmer of Flint Hill, Joe Hurd by name, a coarse-grained, mean-souled man, whom Judith detests. David has fallen in love and secretly married Nan, the stepdaughter of Flint Hill's Odd Jobs man. Her stepfather discovers that Nan is to have a child. He frightens her into a confession that David is responsible, but she does not tell of their marriage, for David has sworn her to secrecy. The Odd Jobs man forces Nan to go with him to the Beresford home and tell her story. David keeps silent as to their marriage and Oliver Beresford gives the Odd Jobs man one thousand dollars to send Nan away from Flint Hill. Judith is horrified at this, her first glimpse of man's terrible injustice to woman. Wyndham Gray, a well-known playwright is spending the summer in Flint Hill's fashionable summer colony. He meets Judith and his interest in her grows into an innocent friendship based on their love for books. Joe Hurd seeing her leave Gray's cabin late one evening, suspects the worst, and mad with jealousy denounces her to her father. Her father believes her guilty and Judith, in a passion of resentment at the injustice done her, leaves her home the next day for New York. Nan's baby boy whom she names David, is born in New York and Nan is forced to the streets to earn a living for him. Her health fails and just as she is at the end of her strength, Judith comes upon her.

Judith on her arrival in New York, finds a position in a store and does well. She becomes interested in the work of a neighborhood Settlement House and an errand, undertaken by her for one of the Settlement workers on Christmas Eve brings her to Nan. Nan dies after telling Judith the story of her marriage and Judith promises to care for little David. In the next eighteen months, David enters the ministry. Judith prospers. She meets Dick Stuart in her settlement work and they fall in love. There is a church conference of the denomination to which Oliver Beresford belongs, held in New York. He and David are sent as delegates and there the ambition of his life is gratified, for David is appointed to one of the mission posts in China. Dick Stuart's mother, an ardent church worker, meets David and his father and invites them to her home and there they are presented to Judith who is introduced as Dick Stuart's wife-to-be. Oliver Beresford denounces her, denying the truthful story she has told the Stuarts that David is her brother's child. Judith decides she will go to Flint Hill to fight for her good name and for the infant David's right to a name. She tells Dick Stuart that when the battle is won, she will return to him.

When she arrives, her father orders her out of the house, but her mother revolts and unexpectedly takes a firm stand and demands that justice be done Judith and little David. David is to preach his farewell sermon that evening and all Flint Hill has gone to church. Mrs. Beresford follows David and his father to church and ushers Judith and little David into the Beresford pew. A few moments later, little David, unnoticed, wanders up the aisle and up the pulpit steps. When David rises to preach he feels a tug at his coat and looks down into the eyes of his little son. One glance at Judith's face tells him what he subconsciously knows—that the child is his son. David lifts his son in his arms, tells his friends and neighbors the truth about Nan and himself and resigns from the ministry. Oliver Beresford is a broken man, but through the love of little David learns to live life on the terms it should be lived.

Clay Dollars

Reviewed by Laura Jansen

Comment: The plot in this story is very slight but there are many good comedy touches that relieve an otherwise rather ordinary story. The sequence where the prohibition officer sticks his hands in the mud, thinking it is brew, is good. The scene where the hero is taken to jail and the sheriff cannot find the key, is also good. Of course, most characters are burlesqued, but are wholesome and entertaining and typical of small town life. The titles help the story along, since they are humorous. It is a light, entertaining little story which never strikes any high lights and is in every way a program picture.

Synopsis: When his uncle dies, Bruce Edwards finds that he is heir to several acres of swamp lands. Therefore he decides to visit Pomona and investigate for himself.

June, the pretty daughter of his uncle's old friend falls in love with him.

Bruce goes to work at the local hotel. He beats Willett's son at pool and they become enemies, since the village Beau Brummel wants to marry June. Bruce, with the aid of Pete, an orphan, gets several pails of mud from his swamps and starts to have it analyzed. Squire Willetts finding that the villagers go often to Bruce's room, reports him to a prohibition officer but the latter, upon investigating, finds nothing but clay.

The Squire manages to read the telegrams Bruce had had sent to him and becomes interested in the swamp lands. On the night of the barn dance, he asks Bruce to come to his office and there offers him fifteen hundred dollars cash for the land. The village bum, peering in, sees the Squire show Bruce the money. The young man refuses to close the deal, returns to the dance and proposes to June. She accepts him.

A little later, the Squire finds his office wrecked and the money gone. He accuses Bruce, who is put in jail.

While he is gone, several men visit the swamps and one of them, claiming that he is the head of a big terra cotta firm, says the land is worth twenty-five thousand dollars. Squire Willets and his followers have come to the swamps as soon as they have heard the city men are there.

When they get back to the village, they find Bruce on the steps of the jail. Willets offers to withdraw his charge if Bruce will accept seven thousand dollars for the land. Just then Pete brings his step-father, on whom he has found what remains of the money after the man has spent part of it on drink.

Bruce refuses the money but offers to trade his uncle's farm back, insisting that the swamp land is worthless. The deal goes through, Bruce marries June. Willetts gets an engineer to work on the land and is told it is worthless. He wants the sheriff to arrest Bruce but the latter says Bruce said the land was no good and cannot be arrested. The train recedes, carrying the lovers away while Willetts and his son watch it go, in hopeless despair that they have been foiled.

Forever

Reviewed by Elizabeth Niles

Comment: For attention to atmosphere, artistic settings, and minute details, combined with wonderful acting, this picture would be difficult to surpass. It has all the rhythm and delicacy of a poem; it holds one as the ever changing light in the evening sky. Yet the story, if you must push through to actualities, is very conventional and slight, and entirely undramatic. Consequently the picture would appeal only to that small class among all modern spectators, who enjoy the fanciful and beautiful.

Synopsis: In France lived, as very congenial neighbors, two families, each with a small child, Gogo the boy and Mimsi the girl. When Gogo's parents suddenly died, his uncle took him to England to raise him as a man of the world. The older he grew, Gogo objected more and more to the life his uncle wished him to lead. Finally Gogo left his uncle's home and went to work for himself. One night at the opera he saw his childhood's sweetheart, now the Duchess of Towers. Drawn by old memories he visited their old home in France; Mimsi had also felt a similar longing and they met and renewed their love. Returning to England, Gogo one night was induced to enter the dressing room of a dancer who was a flame of his uncle's. When the uncle entered, a quarrel followed and in the course of it the uncle cast a slurring remark about Gogo's mother. Though separated at the time, Gogo followed his uncle to his home and there, when the uncle was about to knife him, Gogo struck and killed his uncle. For this he was imprisoned and sentenced to death. Mimsi, however, who was by now divorced from her drunken husband, secured him a pardon and came to visit him just once in the prison. After that they spent their nights together in their dreams, visiting all parts of the world and living together in their dream palace. Then one night she was burned to death in an orphanage fire. Gogo saw her in his dream and tried to break out of his prison, but after a long, hard struggle with the jailers, his heart failed him and he joined Mimsi in the beyond.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED
Concerning the Writing of Photoplays

Q.—I cannot understand why coincidence is not considered good dramatic material. It seems to me that things that happen unexpectedly are dramatic.—W. B.

A—Coincidences often have the effect of drama. When something occurs at the psychological moment, we are almost sure to hear someone exclaim: "Isn't that wonderful! Just like a play!" But it is like a poorly constructed play; for drama is built of logical events that are brought about by the desires and purposes of characters. Every step must be preceded by a reason and followed by a logical result. You will see many infringements of this rule; but if you want to write good, strong drama, avoid "the bolts from the blue" and have your story a well-linked chain of events.

Q.—Will you please explain to me the objection to the reminiscent form for screen stories?—N. T.

A—The reminiscent form destroys the illusion that we are looking at actual happenings. We are seeing the events through the eyes of the one who is recounting the story, and we are not certain of how much of it really happened and how much of it is the product of the story-teller's imagination. If the reminiscence is only part of the screen story, cutting into the main body, it causes a break which weakens the dramatic structure.

Q.—I have viewed on the screen, "The Old Nest," "Love Never Dies" and "Lying Lips." Each of these photoplays contains a spectacular scene. The first contains a head-on collision on a bridge and both trains fall down a precipice. In the second, as the train was going over a bridge, the bridge broke and the train fell into the river below. In the third, the steamship strikes on a mine and is sunk. Were these spectacular scenes real? Explain how these spectacular scenes are done.—A. S.

A.—It is possible that these scenes were filmed from actual wrecks, but not probable. As a general rule, train wrecks and shipwrecks are filmed from miniature models. By bringing the camera close to the minatures, the same effect is attained as from filming the actual wrecks, without the enormous expense of demolishing real bridges, trains and ships. The process of photographing from small models is quite complicated and space does not permit a detailed explanation of the same.

Q—What do producers mean by "synopsis?" Is there any place where one can secure a model synopsis?—H. D. P.

A.—A synopsis is the story from which a photoplay continuity is made. In writing a synopsis, one sets down, in sequence, the action of the drama, together with such explanation regarding characters and locale as is actually necessary. Model synopses are included in courses on scenario writing given by some of the best correspondence schools in photoplay writing.

Q.—Is it necessary to have literary style in writing the detailed synopsis of a photoplay? —R. V.

A.—Literary style is not an essential, though it is well to tell your story in a fashion that will interest the reader and present the dramatic moments in such a way as to make the reader feel the power and strength of the story. You must first have a screen plot, but instead of having it cold and lifeless, you can give it warmth and life by a careful choice of words.

Q.—I have a story in which the hero works out his destiny according to the laws of the planets. Is this attractive and novel?—A. T. M.

A.—It is a bit novel, but attractive only to those who are interested in the subject of an individual being governed by such laws. It is lacking in universal appeal. The successful photoplay should deal with themes and emotions that are fundamental, and understood by the great majority of the mixed audience of the moving picture.

Q.—Does mental conflict mean the struggle of a character with his conscience?—S. P.

A.—Not necessarily. Such a conflict is very difficult to convey on the screen, but mental conflict is more often used to convey a battle between opposed minds or wills. A conflict of purpose would be mental, as distinguished from the more physical forms of conflict.

Q.—I am frequently told that the different situations I create are time worn and hackneyed. How can I tell these old situations and how can I help myself to create new ones? —M. B.

A.—This is a question that we are frequently asked and it is a common one with new writers. As a matter of fact, originality of treatment seems to come with experience, more or less instinctively. There is a reason for this: The new writer is too apt to plunge into a story idea that may occur to him, without pausing to think whether he has seen the same idea before or not. A very obvious plot idea naturally leads to the same series of situations, all more or less alike. As an example; take the idea of two young men who work in a bank, both of them in love with the president's daughter. The amateur writer knows that somehow or another the 'good' one must marry the girl while the 'bad' one must not. What then more natural than to conceive the idea of having the bad one rob the bank? To add complications the villain alters the books so that the blame falls on the hero. Then the writer realizes that he has to get the hero cleared in some way and again what more natural than to let the girl be the means of clearing him. This is merely a crude example to show how an old idea is apt to lead the writer into the same old situations. Had he paused to think he would have seen that there are dozens of ways that the story could have been handled without the villain faking the entries so that they showed against the hero. The trouble is that the average amateur does not pause to think, he grasps at the obvious and for this reason he produces hackneyed material.



"Why, *I* could write a better story than that!"

Thousands say that, just as *you* have said it dozens of times

Perhaps you could

THE motion picture industry extends a genuine welcome to you to *try;* and offers you fame and fortune if you succeed.

The industry faces the most serious shortage of photoplays in its history. It needs, and will liberally pay for, 2000 good scenarios. Not mere ideas, not patchworks of incident and action, but connected, workable stories for the screen. It is because the studios cannot obtain sufficient good material that so many thousands of patrons are criticizing so many of the pictures shown.

And it may be that you, who can tell a good from a bad picture, can help.

"But," you say, "I am not a writer. I am only a housewife—or a salesman"—or whatever you are.

C. Gardner Sullivan, who started life as a farmer boy, might have looked at it that way, too. But he didn't. He tried; and now his income is $2000 a week. He was not a "born" writer. But he discovered that he had creative imagination, a sense of dramatic values. The rest was a simple matter of training.

A nation-wide search for story-telling ability

Here and there among the millions of men and women who attend the picture shows the essential talent for photoplay writing exists. And the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, with the co-operation of leading motion picture producers, has undertaken to locate it. By means of a novel and intensely interesting questionnaire, prepared by expert scenario writers, it is able to detect the latent ability in any person who will seriously apply the test. If the subject interests you, you are invited to avail yourself of this free examination.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation is primarily an agency for the sale of photoplays to producers. Its Department of Education is a training school for scenario writers —a school that selects its students through the test applied by this questionnaire. Unless new writers are trained there will be no scenarios for us to sell, nor plays for the studios to produce.

In the three years of its existence the Palmer Corporation has trained many scenario writers and sold many of their photoplays. You have sat spellbound in your theatre and witnessed the work of Palmer students which was written in farm houses, city flats, and mining camps.

And the same studios that produced and paid for those pictures have rejected scenarios submitted by novelists and magazine writers whose names are known wherever the language is spoken.

The acquired art of fine writing cannot be transferred to the screen. But the native gifts, creative imagination and dramatic instinct—which means vivid story telling—are the life and the soul of the motion picture industry. Trained to express themselves in the language of the screen, these gifts are priceless to their possessor.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE IS OUR GUIDE

to the talent we seek. It was prepared by Prof. Malcolm MacLean, former instructor of short-story writing in Northwestern University, and Mr. H. H. Van Loan, the celebrated photoplaywright. It is a simple test which you may apply to yourself, to determine whether you have the essentials for successful scenario writing—imagination and dramatic insight. Before undertaking to train applicants in the new art of photoplay writing, we measure their aptitude for the work through this questionnaire.

It is a simple test which you can apply to yourself in your own home.

YOU ARE INVITED TO APPLY OUR TEST TO YOURSELF

We will gladly send you the Palmer questionnaire upon request. Answer, to the best of your ability, the questions in it, and we will tell you frankly what the record reveals to us.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation cannot endow you nor any other person with creative imagination; it cannot impart dramatic insight. But if you have a natural inclination toward these essential elements of photoplay writing, it can be discovered through the questionnaire; and through the Course and Service your talent can be trained in the technique of scenario writing. And it can be done by home study at low cost.

You may find in yourself possibilities of achievement and big income you never dreamed of. Will you send the coupon below and apply this fascinating test to yourself?

PALMER PHOTOPLAY Corporation Department of Education
I. W. Hellman Bldg., Los Angeles, Cal.

Please send me, without cost or obligation on my part, your questionnaire. I will answer the questions in it and return it to you for analysis. If I pass the test, I am to receive further information about your Course and Service.

NAME .....

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THE EDITOR MAGAZINE,
BOOK HILL,
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The publishers of The Editor also publish The Black Cat, a twice-monthly magazine of short stories, and one-act plays by authors who are trying to avoid the beaten tracks.
$.15 a copy; $2.50 a year

Gossip Street

(*Continued from page 33*)

now prefers the original story written directly for the screen, in place of the novel or short story which has been adapted.

"THE DESERT of the Damned," written by Bert D. Essex for the newly incorporated Roy H. Klumb Productions, is now being filmed.

MONTE Katterjohn has finished another Alaskan story. This one is named, "A Stampede Madonna."

KATHRAN Cuddy, author of many fairy tales and stories and plays for children, has come to Hollywood to study the technique of photoplays, preparatory to placing some of her work on the screen.

BERNARD McConville, one of the best known scenario writers on the west coast, collaborated with Director Emmet J. Flynn in the preparation of the story, "Shame," which has recently been released.

The Screen Drama League

(Continued from page 8)

ter, of course, will be to get in touch with prominent men and women and organizations in every town, and to gain their support against any movement calculated to hamper the motion picture art.

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"A Camera Has No Ears"

(Continued from page 27)

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The PHOTODRAMATIST

THE SCENARIO WRITER'S MAGAZINE



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The PHOTODRAMATIST



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BEGINNING IN THE MAY NUMBER

The Photodramatist will inaugurate a monthly department of unusual value to screen writers, to be conducted by H. H. Van Loan, the well-known photoplaywright. In addition to this feature, there will be the usual constructive, helpful articles, written by men and women who "know."

The Photodramatist, published monthly in the I. W. Hellman Bldg., Los Angeles, California, by Photodramatist Publishing Company, Inc. Copyrighted, 1922, by Photodramatist Publishing Company, Inc. Subscription price—$2.50 per year. Single copies—25 cents. Application for entry as second class mail matter pending.

LEGAL SERVICE BUREAU

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The Palmer Photoplay Corporation announces the inauguration of a Legal Service Bureau, to be operated in the interests of students of its Department of Education, and established authors.
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APRIL, 1922 Volume III. No. 11

APR 11 '22

The PHOTODRAMATIST

"What Will People Say?"

Screen Dramatist Must Remember that the Public is the Final Judge

By Mary L. Piper



Mary L. Piper

IF I were asked my opinion as to the most vital principles involved in the writing of the photoplay, I would not hesitate to reply—*theme* and the *public*. The story without a theme is like a man without a backbone—a weak, spineless collapsible thing; despised of the many, and shunned by the knowing. Not every person can place his finger on the weak spot of the themeless story, but—just the same, they all feel or sense that something is wrong; and are not slow to brand that type of story N. G. It is fairly certain, too, that they will watch for the name of the photodramatist who wrote it to appear again; and watch, mind you, for the express purpose of avoiding his next endeavor "to put something over on them." Alluring titles and sensational advertising will avail him nothing.

I have heard it remarked that photoplay writing is mere child's play. That is a ridiculous mistake—and an insult to the intelligence of the photodramatist. Photoplay writing is an *ART*. In its infancy, to be sure; but its growth is so rapid and sure that very soon it will become a "full fledged" and widely recognized art. I even dare to prophesy that the time will be when it will stand without a peer in the realm of art. It is even now—although in its swaddling clothes—the most widely patronized of the arts. The public would mourn its loss (if such a calamity were possible) much as a bereaved mother mourns the loss of the babe she cuddled close to her breast until unseen hands snatched it from her. Could another babe fill the place in that mother's heart—fully satisfy her?

Just so it is with the photoplay. There never has been—and never will be—an art so thoroughly satisfying to the heart and mind of the big public. Young and old, rich and poor, high and lowly, sophisticated and unsophisticated, literate and illiterate they come. Some to be entertained; others to be enlightened. And all expect to be—and *should be*—satisfied. Sincerity of purpose to satisfy the public is the key to the door of success in the art of photoplay-writing. Therein lies my reason for naming the public as one of the most vital factors to be reckoned with by the photodramatist.

The public isn't easily satisfied, either. The time of the program of "hashed ideas" has passed. The writer who spared his brains at the expense of the public is out of a position, and he may now exercise both hands at a *job*.

How eager to learn, and how apt is the public! The advancement it has made in its intelligent understanding of the new art is phenomenal; and to its demands for newer, bigger and better ideas we owe the rapid progress of the "soon-to-be-peerless" art of photoplay-writing.

It strikes me very forcibly that the public is the *big* "man behind the man behind the gun." It behooves the gunner (photodramatist) then to see that the gun is loaded with the proper ammunition, such as theme, good plot and real situations; and when it is ready to fire, touch it off with the "spark of good title." I'll warrant then that the big man (the public) behind the man behind the gun will see that it hits the bull's eye.

Theme alone does not make a success; but a theme out of which a plot worthy of careful and logical motivation springs is pretty sure to strike, if the evolution is logical. It behooves us, too, to bear in mind that the public is a very wide awake and intelligent body; and just so sure as an effort is made to "slip something over" on it, there will be a rebound—a boomerang. Back will come the story with such a disconcerting wallop that, for a time, religious thought will come hard; but when we are able to sit up and once more take notice we will, perhaps, think twice before again "shooting." We will think seriously, too, if we are wise.

Photoplay writing, we are fast learning, is an art wherein "blanks" come high. Just a little tip: Don't shoot blanks for the entertainment of the public. It is apt to lose its sense of humor. And do not fool yourself about it not being in the "know" regarding blanks and bullets. To the fine discrimination of the public the photodramatist owes everything for whatever success he has achieved; and so long as he continues to *satisfy it* he will continue to achieve. The higher he rises the better his public will like him; and the more willing he will find it to bear him on—and upward.

Some months ago a literary friend—a writer of verse—said to me, "I think I will jump into the photoplay-writing game and make some easy money." Just like that! "Of course I will write under a *nom de plume*. Wouldn't care to have some of my high-brow friends know about it. It is such child's play—such crude work. Nothing to it but endorsing the big checks." I could not repress a smile, but kept silent, trusting to time and experience to set him right. It required just one ear-splitting "blank" to wake him to the fact that the "game" he so easily jumped into was not a game at all; but an art far in advance of any he had ever studied. And *he admits it.* He is bound to arrive, and when he does he will be proud to sign his name to his achievement.

Photodramatists! Step up! Pep up! The judgment day is now upon you. And each one shall be judged by the merits of the works he does. Be they worthy—then long may you dwell in the land of the happy and blessed. Be they not so—then you shall be ignominously ejected from the realm of highest art. Your judge—the public—stands ready to judge you. You know what it demands and should have. *Satisfy it.*



Aids Campaign for Better Films

INAUGURATING a movement that should exert tremendous influence toward the production of only the best motion pictures, The Los Angeles Cooperative Council for Better Films, a body composed of representatives from the various women's clubs of Southern California, met on March 16th, at the Friday Morning Club House, Los Angeles, California. Frederick Palmer, president of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, was the principal speaker of the day. Heartily endorsing the Council's plan to secure better pictures by withholding patronage from theaters that exhibit inferior productions—but agreeing with his audience that censorship by a politically appointed board is un-American and impractical—he spoke at some length upon the efforts being made by scenario writers to aid in bringing the art of the screen to the highest possible standards. Following his address, Mr. Palmer was requested to help in organizing a committee of influential members of the motion picture profession to cooperate with the Council in their new movement.

The Story—*Plus*

Knowledge of Screen Technique of Great Value to Writers of Fiction

By William Wallace Cook

THAT "the story's the thing" is a truism, insisted upon by those who know, or think they know, until we writers of fiction are beginning to feel annoyed at a statement which has become very, very banal. Of course the story's the thing; it has always been the thing and will always be the thing, so long as writers write and readers read and editors buy. But may I suggest, in these days of second serial rights, book rights, rights to translate into foreign languages, including the Scandinavian, and all other rights, tangible and intangible accrued or accruing to the industrious writer, that quite the most profitable are those rights in which motion picture producers are interested? And if a story is a *very* good thing, it is all the better for being written *plus;* that is, plus 'adaptability' to the screen.

Let us try hitching our little wagon to a star when we buckle on the harness of plot and aim our Pegasus and our load of tricks at the magazine editor. I would not advise particularizing among the prominent ladies and gentlemen of Screendom and to "fit" this, that or the other favorite; no, the bright, particular star to which I would hitch my ideas would be that of first, and constantly growing, magnitude in the galaxy of Art—the Silver Sheet. This I should call particularizing along general lines.

In these days of continuity writers, with the staff of every prominent motion picture producer numbering among its trained and clever minds men and women who untangle incidents and give them proper sequence, aim, and direction, the writer's story becomes a salable screen article if he is canny in shaping his material. We touch here upon the matter of technic, and that is something to be acquired.

Like the famous gentleman who talked logically for many years without knowing a syllogism from a last year's birds' nest, a writer of fiction is bound now and again to create good screen material in constructing a story without any technical knowledge of screen requirements. But this is in the nature of a lucky accident, and in these latter days I am constantly discovering that my earlier work occasionally blundered into this good fortune. Twenty-five or thirty years ago it was impossible to write with one eye on the magazine editor and the other on the silent drama, for the very reason that there was no silent drama. This status endured until comparatively recent times, and authors lived and wrought for serial, book, and dramatic rights alone. When motion picture producers entered the market, old material was dug up which by chance was made to serve their purpose through careful editing. I have sold to them picture rights in stories written for another generation, having stumbled happily upon something approaching up-to-date requirements. Here, truly, were "argosies of magic sails, pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales"—bales of pure velvet.

These unexpected successes led me to desire a knowledge of the rules of the game. I bought many books and they no doubt were helpful; but I take pleasure in stating here, unsolicited and with not the first thought of doing any advertising, that my greatest help was derived from a course of Palmer Photoplay instruction. I took up the course solely as a writer of stories who wished to know how to make an occasional story as acceptable to a motion picture producer as it might be to a magazine editor—with a corresponding increase of profit. I

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Millions of People

acclaim William Wallace Cook as their "favorite author." In the past thirty years he has written and sold more than five hundred virile, swiftly-moving stories and novels. It was only, however, after he took up the study of screen technique that his work proved adaptable to motion picture production.

The Screen Drama League

An Organization to Combat the Censorship Evil

Publication in the March issue of *The Photodramatist* of the principles and ideals of The Screen Drama League brought such an overwhelming and instantaneous response from our readers, that there can be no doubt as to the popularity of this movement to combat the censorship evil.

Despite the widespread campaign that is being fostered and directed by fanatics and politicians who—for ulterior reasons — would like to tear down the great motion picture industry and deprive this country of its most popular form of amusement, there are many thousands of thinking persons who are awake to the truth, and who are ready to enlist in the ranks of the screen's defenders.

These people know that so-called "censorship" is merely a blind behind which lurks the greatest menace to America — suppression of free speech and freedom of thought; they realize that the morality or immorality of the pictures is a secondary issue, that the alleged censorship boards now in power have been unable to agree on practically every film that has come to their attention; they foresee, as the men and women of the picture profession did long ago, that, if the demagogues and fanatics masquerading as "reformers" are allowed to pursue their course unhampered, the total annihilation of motion pictures is but a matter of time. Therefore, they have flocked to the support of this newest of the Arts, and await merely instructions as to what course they shall pursue to aid in the campaign inaugurated by The Screen Drama League.

Our Creed

1. To free screen drama from the burdens of minority censorship, political exploitation and the emasculating influence of organized propaganda.
2. To assure to the photodramatist the same freedom of expression accorded to authors, artists and other creative workers.
3. To secure for the photodramatist the right to submit his work to the public unmutilated, thereby assuring him a review by the majority, subject only to proper police regulations.
4. To support and encourage makers of clean and worthy pictures, and to discourage the manufacturers of unworthy pictures by refusing patronage to them.
5. To encourage school, social and parental supervision of children's film entertainment by selecting for them those pictures which are most suitable, thereby permitting the adult to enjoy the same measure of realism on the screen as has always been found in literature and on the speaking stage, and permitting the screening of dramatic masterpieces without unwarranted expurgation of vital scenes.
6. To use voice, pen, vote and personal influence, so far as is possible, in resisting not only class legislation against the screen but also any legislation and propaganda seeking to impose upon any creative art or medium of expression—press, pulpit or public rostrum—censorship or hampering restrictions desired only by a minority.
7. To study and support the best in screen drama and to foster, in every possible way the development and elevation of the motion picture art.

In the March issue we asked each of you to appoint yourself a committee of one, in your town, to carry on this work; to get in touch with others interested in the anti-censorship movement as soon as possible; to meet at an appointed place, and to elect a president, vice-president and secretary—the secretary to carry on all necessary correspondence with the editor of *The Photodramatist*. In a number of towns this has already been done; and the interest shown in the movement is more than gratifying. There are many towns, however, in which such organization has not taken place; and, if you are a friend of the films, we trust that you will not delay in obtaining the names of others who believe as you do, and in forming a definite Chapter of The Screen Drama League. The editor of *The Photodramatist* will gladly aid you, at all times; and when troublesome questions arise do not hesitate to let us know.

To the many Chapters that have already been formed, we suggest that immediate steps be taken toward the spreading of propaganda favorable to the films. This can best be done by exerting influence upon officers of the leading social organizations in each town. Such influence, however, should be used legitimately. The Screen Drama League does not propose to use the tactics of the "reformers." The facts should speak for themselves, and the most important thing is to get the facts before persons of prominence, in such a manner as will appeal to their sense of justice and fair play.

Visit the officials of your Chamber of Commerce, Woman's Club, Ministerial Association and other similar bodies. Tell them that you enjoy the motion pictures—that you consider them a legitimate form of entertainment, and that censorship is tending to deprive you of the best films. Let them know of the ridiculous differences of opinion on the part of every censorship board now in operation—proving that, in actual practice, it cannot be successful. Acquaint them with the fact that the big studios are care-

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"That's Just Like Him"

To Satisfy an Audience Your Characters Must Be Consistent With Life

By J. R. McCarthy

PERCIVAL Hilmet starves to death because he does not care to peel potatoes. "That's just like Percival," say you and I and Mrs. Jones. We beam with satisfaction: our expectations have been fulfilled, our judgment justified.

Lucy Saunders jilts the grocer's boy, with whom she has been petting of an evening the last four years, and marries the jaunty salesman with the red tie. "Wasn't that Lucy all over?" say you and I and the Rev. Mr. King. We are quite proud of ourselves. Don't we know human nature?

At the risk of being mistaken for the Home Town Weekly society column, let our argument proceed:

Mrs. Homer Bilger, rotund disciple of the great late Roosevelt, home-maker, home-lover, husband-adorer, child-bearer and raiser, at forty-five elopes with young Brown, the free lover and free verser. Outrageous! Incredible! Egregious! "Who would have thought it? That wasn't like Mrs. Bilger at all! Wonder what on earth made her do it! What got into the woman?" We are disappointed. Something is wrong. *Our neighbor has acted out of character.* We will not be satisfied until we know what unusual circumstance or accident, such as the perusal of too many yellow-backs or a blow on the head, caused the woman we knew so well to become suddenly a woman we did not know.



"Providence may do with men as it wills," says Mr. McCarthy in this unusual treatise on characterization; "but the photoplay writer must give an accounting to his audience." If you are puzzled over the problem of creating interesting characters, you will find a solution in this article.

You and I and Aunt Sally are the patrons of the screen. Percy Hilmet, Lucy Saunders and Mrs. Bilger are the characters there portrayed. Highbrows, newspaper critics, even our own common sense, may tell us at times that no human being is consistent or can be consistent. But the evidence is against even our common sense. To be satisfactory to an audience, a character *must* be consistent. He must do, not the thing the onlookers expected, but a thing that the onlookers *might* have expected. If he is going to kill himself he must somehow have permitted his neighbors, the movie patrons, to know that he might possibly commit suicide. If he is going to kiss his partner's bride (which heaven—and the censors—forbid!) he must give beforehand some hint of being that sort of man.

Our common sense may tell us what it wishes about human nature—that no man knows what his neighbor will do next, that it is a wise son who knows his own sister, that an Irishman will turn the other cheek—but we must be wary of any foolish common sense which talks to us like this. The characters we create are known by what they do and say. If they do and say things which keep them in the spectator's mind, which make the spectator understand them, love them or hate them, then are our characters successful. Then are they real creatures of flesh and blood, to be remem-

bered and chuckled over, or brought to mind and cursed. If we have been untrue to life, so much the worse for life. We remember that verisimilitude is a truer thing than verity. Or at least a subtler and more difficult thing. Which takes you back to the hills of your childhood, a photograph of a sheep pasture, or a painting of vague hills in the moonlight? And yet the photograph is a transcription, accurate, not to be gainsaid.

A wise providence may do with men as it wills; make murderers of monks and give no reason; make bootleggers of primary teachers and account to no one. But the author must give an accounting, and the accounting is final. You are a liar, Mr. Author, says the audience, and, though he took the incident from his neighbor's life, and have three bank clerks to swear to its accuracy, the author, is literally, in truth a liar. He has told the truth, but has failed to make the truth plausible, which failure makes of his verity an error.

Let us then be plausible. Let us simulate life by showing a little less or a little more than life might show. The consummation to be desired is that our characters live. Surely we shall not permit pale accuracy to deny us that achievement. If Percival Hilmet is to starve himself, let the gallery be prepared; if Lucy Saunders is to marry the salesman with the red tie, let Mrs. Jones say to Mr. Jones, "There, Sam! Didn't I tell you?" If Mrs. Bilger is to desert her brood for the bunk-writer, for pity's sake give the poor lady a wicked eye, or a past, or a kind blow on the head.



To a Dreamer

(After Reading "Dreams for Sale")

By Louie H. Osborn

I'll buy your dreams, my gentle sir,
And add them unto mine;
For dreams, when all the world is dark,
Can cause the sun to shine.

They tide us over bitter days;
They make our hardships less;
And when we're happy, they enhance
Our very blessedness.

We dream of love and fame and wealth,
We dream of good to do;
And then set earnestly to work
To make our dreams come true.

Be the achievement large or small,
So that the heart be true.
The dream is what begets the deed,—
The dream of folks like you.

So let me buy them, gentle sir,
If sell you must and will;
But sell no dream, unless your soul
Can keep on dreaming still.



UNCONSCIOUS humorist — a woman who protests against the costumes in a picture showing life in the year 500 B. C., but who insists that the salvation of the world depends upon a return to "the good old days."

The Screen Writer's Gold Mine

Study of Motion Pictures Unsurpassed as Spur to a Flagging Imagination

By Hapsburg Liebe

IN MY humble opinion, there is no greater spur to the flagging imagination of the older fiction writer, and no greater booster to the struggling imagination of the beginning writer of fiction, than to see motion pictures that are real pictures. One should see them at least twice, for the first time one is merely a spectator in spite of himself, and one's memory is rarely good enough to enable him to go over the story in visualization and pick it to pieces afterward in order to trace out the lines of construction. The second seeing will nearly always unfold hows and whys and wherefores that are distinctly enlightening. Of course, studying the screen is a veritable gold mine to the screen writer; that goes without saying.

Last night I went to sit out "Tol'able David" in one of our best picture theatres. I had been trying for days to pick up a promising theme—which should always come with plot, by the way, in fiction story or screen story, if they are to be really worth while—with no success worth mentioning because I was tired. Not physically, but mentally tired. Four hundred short stories and a few novels (published) do sap a man's plot-and-theme resources; digging out something "new" becomes difficult! This "Tol'able David" was a good story in fiction before it came to the screen. It had the three archangels of the silver sheet; *i. e.*, humor, pathos, and —strongest ringer of them all, perhaps—suspense. It was about mountaineers, and mountaineers are my long suit. I came home with a story in my head, that, oddly or not, was in no way like "Tol'able David." That is, I had the theme and the first big situation of a story, and the rest must naturally follow. The picture was the stimulant I needed to start me thinking.

A really artistic screen story and a really artistic fiction story are more alike in backbone than most people realize. Suppose we take for an example a story that will do for either picture or magazine, pull off its flesh and see what lies beneath—

The base, or foundation, is both unique and natural, and it sends a line of interest steadily upward to the first major plot incident. The interest line does not fall here; but soon, supported by minor incidents, it curves upward and reaches the second major plot incident—higher, you understand, than the first. When the last big incident has been reached by this same means, the line of interest goes quickly upward to the climax, the very highest point of all, and there the story breaks off sharply and subtly. Each incident is supported by those behind it, grows out of those that have gone before; there is little or no use of coincidence, or anything else that is in the least a strain for effect.

This is the backbone outline of a good photoplay story and of a good magazine story. If in the latter-named it has a style that is unusually clever, philosophic, dramatic, or humorous, it becomes a great fiction story. Splendid acting, directing, etc., make it a great moving picture, too. Anticlimax in the one is apt to be anticlimax in the other, and nothing could be more inartistic or amateurish; that's why it should break off sharply and subtly at the end. If the fiction writer will study the screen for these values and learn to bring each succeeding major incident in his stories to a higher point of interest than has been before brought out, allowing the interest line to drop nowhere below an attained level, he will write better stuff.

If there is any one big element that will carry any kind of story alone, that element is suspense, which in this connection is, of course, the desire to know what is to fol-

A Few Years Ago

Hapsburg Liebe was a humble Tennessee mountaineer. Today, by virtue of hard work and diligent study, he ranks as one of America's leading fiction and screen writers. His advice to photoplaywrights is the result of his own experience, and is, therefore, authoritative.

low. Last night when "Tol'able David" and the villain were struggling desperately to reach a revolver that had fallen and lay under the dresser, the scene shifted. It was a tense situation; all depended upon who got the revolver; everything focused on that one point. Then the scene shifted back, and we went to see who had been victor in the desperate struggle. It was the finest bit of suspense I've witnessed in a photoplay in months. We saw the front door of the cabin from the outside. The door opened a little, then swung shut again. The audience held its breath while it waited to see who, whether David or the villain, came out—for one of them must be dead, and only the living man could come out. When David came staggering into view, the audience stirred and drew a long breath—of relief. We might have known that the story would be spoiled if it was the villain that came out, of course, but the interest line was so high here and the illusion so fine that we didn't think, and that is art!

In the scenes just mentioned, another strong and much to be desired element, whether in photoplay or in magazine story, was portrayed masterfully. That element is *suggestion,* which must be put subtly and yet so clearly that the most unsophisticated person may grasp it instantly for what it is. If the camera had shown us David killing the villain in the cabin, it wouldn't have been half so strong as showing merely the man who came out alive. You get that, don't you? Lack of knowing just how to handle this one element correctly is responsible for the failure of many would-be fiction writers. It is here that the master shows the finer points of his technique, whether he be photodramatist or magazine writer.

In studying the screen, it seems to me unwise to study all manner of pictures. I think one should study only pictures that portray his own particular line or field of endeavor. It is infinitely better to know one field well than to know half a dozen superficially. No man will ever entirely exhaust any single line. It is true that the fellow who writes humor can usually write tragedy also, but he will write better humor if he sticks altogether to that, and the same may be said of Bill Hart stories and slapstick stuff. The man who skips from Afghanistan to Panama and from Tennessee's mountains to society is not at all apt to write anything well. And the field that one knows best is the field for his labors, whether "literary" or for the screen. This is old stuff, of course. It's been preached for years. And yet, the untrained author is still trying to write of people and places he doesn't know the least thing about! Little brother, if you've written a South Seas story when you haven't been out of Corncob Corners in your life, burn it and forget it, and try a story of Corncob Corners. Write your hundredth, your thousandth story of Corncob Corners. The South Seas hold no such story as you've got right there at home—if you'll only look it up. Your own particular acre of diamonds lies in your own back yard!

The editor of one of our foremost magazines recently sent a story back to me with some such accompanying message as this: "I believe this will make a good movie. We don't care much for high lights. If you fellows would stop writing with one eye on the screen and the other on the magazines, you'd do better work." This editor was right, and he was wrong—editors are just as human as kings and ditch-diggers. He was right in that one may not serve two masters, and he was wrong in his accusation of me. He doesn't like the pictures, I imagine. Perhaps he's seen a lot of senseless slapstick of the oldfashioned variety, as well as some painted-woman wishwash and slush, gush, mush, and tango of modern vintage—for the movies have their sins to answer for, as well as the ministers have. But if the dear public didn't want the above-named stuff, it wouldn't be made; therefore the public should be kicked along with the movies! But to get back to the track I left at a tangent a moment ago—the question, if it is a question, of serving two masters.

It cannot be done successfully, of course. But if you put screen value into a fiction story you'll invariably have a more readable story on that account; and in addition you'll have a story that is likely to bring you for photoplay rights four times as much as the magazine pays you—if I am permitted to judge by my own experience. One doesn't necessarily have to write "with one eye on the screen" to do this. For that matter, he needn't write with his eye on anything. The story that is written for its own sake is the best of stories. It's art. It is also art to have a rising plot.

The best few words of advice I've heard or read for photodramatists, real and would-be, is "Think in pictures." If writers of fiction would "think in pictures" a little more than they do—that is, visualize closer and more carefully—they would describe their scenes much more clearly.



Little Hints for Screen Writers

The editor will be pleased, at all times, to discuss on this page any problem which readers of The Photodramatist may suggest to him

LIFE is replete with coincidence. You may walk down the street, and bump squarely into a friend whom you have not seen for years—and whom you have been trying desperately to locate. But a photoplay differs from life in this respect. Although it would be perfectly correct—and possibly good drama—for your leading character to meet an old friend in this unexpected manner, incidents must be shown to explain in a logical way just why the leading man and his friend chanced to be in the same location, at the same time. You may protest against this requirement; but it is ironclad. Also, you may depend upon it that there were incidents that actually motivated the meeting, in real life, of you and your friend. Fate conducts a drama all her own—but, unlike the photoplay writer, she does not always let the actors obtain a knowledge of the motivation that brings about apparent coincidences.

"WHAT is meant by the 'tempo' of a story?" we are repeatedly asked. "Why should it rise and fall? Why should it change at all?" Undoubtedly the question of "tempo" in a photoplay is one that puzzles a number of writers. It is best, of course, not to worry about tempo. Construct your stories in a technically perfect manner, and the problem of proper tempo will be solved. However, to satisfy the demand for an explanation, it may be well to set forth a brief analysis of the term in these columns. Tempo, generally speaking, is the gauge of the emotional pitch or intensity of a story—much like "time" in music. In order to keep the attention of an audience, this emotional pitch must constantly vary. A change in intensity, or emotional pitch, therefore, is known as a "change in tempo." Professional photodramatists group their material so that the tempo rises gradually to a climax and falls quickly away to a state of repose, immediately that the big moment has been passed. We wish to repeat, however, that the "tempo" of a well constructed, dramatic photoplay will take care of itself.

DON'T jot down your "big idea" and enclose it in a letter to your favorite scenario editor, hoping that he will buy it and build a photoplay thereon. Editors have "ideas" of their own. They have no time in which to consider, or to build up, the bare ideas of others. Do your own building. Picture producers—in these days of special screen technique—desire stories already written in proper form for placing into continuity. If your idea is big enough, and if you have constructed your photoplay properly, you may then rest assured that it will sooner or later find a purchaser.

A CONCENSUS of opinion on the part of the big producers seems to be that the ideal photoplay must contain the following fundamental ingredients: Theme, preferably one with a wealth of "heart interest;" originality of plot, and novel treatment thereof; "different" characterization, in which the actors of the play are cast in life-like, yet unusual roles; and a grouping of material that will bring about big, dramatic situations. If your screen drama contains these elements, you are on the royal road to success.

UNTRAINED writers persistently fall into the error of attempting to write the continuity, instead of the synopsis, of their story. Were the continuity of a motion picture ever purchased by a studio, it would be only because the story itself was so powerful that the producer felt justified in spending a large sum of money in placing it back into synopsis form and ordering a rebuilding thereof. Even experienced staff-writers of the large companies make no attempt to put their dramas into continuity form until they have been thoroughly considered by a committee of producer, director, star and author, and desired changes outlined. It may be seen, then, that the inexperienced photoplay writer who attempts to foist a continuity upon a scenario editor is merely exhibiting his ignorance, and has small chance to obtain serious consideration of his work.

Building the Photoplay Plot-Skeleton

No Screen Story Can Be Stronger Than the Framework Around Which It Is Constructed

By George Rix

EVERY successful photoplay is built around a story; and every story is built around a framework which I call the plot-skeleton. Provide the story with extraordinary settings, garnish it with beautiful gowns, season it with humor, pathos and brilliant subtitles as you will—but in the last analysis the screen story is no stronger than its plot-skeleton.

Every writer has a method of developing his plot; perhaps more or less instinctive, perhaps deliberately and consciously mechanical. Any method of plot development, if it gets results, is a good method. That which I shall explain here has proved decidedly helpful to me. When I first began to coax stories out of a typewriter I had no particular method of developing my plot-germ; I just sat down at my desk and wrote. Soon, however, I felt the need of a definite method; and after considerable experimenting I evolved the system I now use.

I have found it of great service in keeping the threads of my plot in mind, especially over interruptions, often of days at a time. By devising a chart upon which to work out my story I made it easier to capture the ideas which floated in and out of my head and to put each in its proper place. Gradually my method has come to be what it now is, a combination of chart and card index.

Here's how I go to work to develop my plot skeleton: When I feel the bite of a story-germ I take a sheet of paper and draw a vertical line down the middle. This is what I call the trunk line. Beginning at the top I extend a short line horizontically to the left. At the end of this short, horizontal line I jot down brief notes of the first step in the plot. I call it the first plot-event. I number this "One."

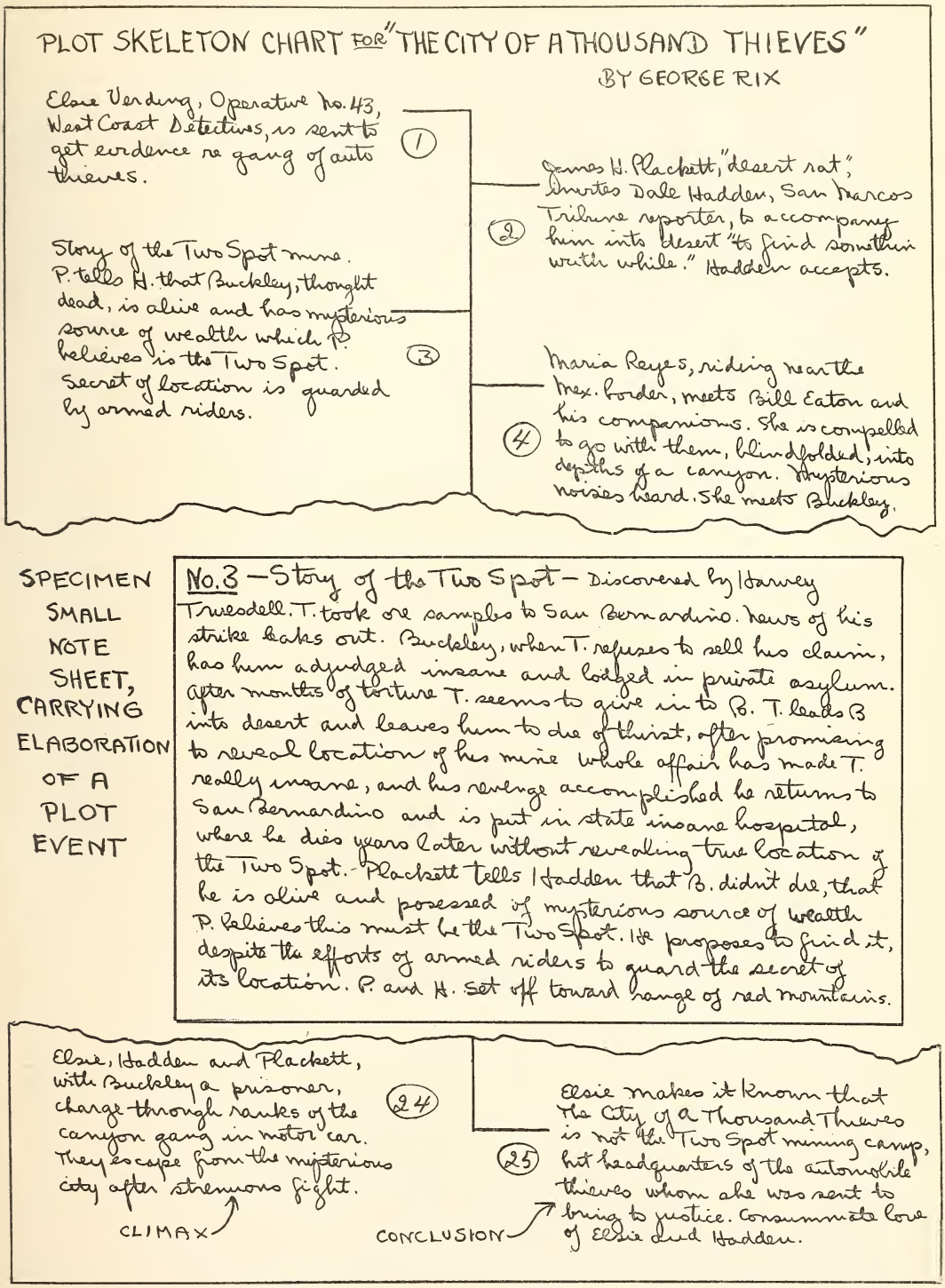


Every writer has his own method of plot development. The one used by Mr. Rix, however, has been proved successful, and is well worth the attention of aspiring photoplay-wrights. The chart printed on the opposite page will aid you in studying this article.

Next I take another sheet of paper, usually a smaller sheet of cheap copy paper and after numbering it "One" I write upon it a few "keywords" to connect it up with the chart. Going back to the chart I extend another, short horizontal line; to the right, this time, and make notations of plot-event Number Two.

Now I take a second sheet of the copy paper, number that "Two," and "key" it. Then back to the chart, extending a third line; this one to the left. Again I make brief notes of the third plot-event, this time as Number Three.

The process is repeated indefinitely, working down through the climax and on to the conclusion of the story. When I have reached this point, supposing there are twenty-five plot-events or principal incidents in the story, I have a chart much like an inverted tree with alternate left and right branches; and twenty-five sheets of notes, numbered and keyed, to correspond.



Now I take each sheet and elaborate the plot-event which it carries. If upon going over this rough plot-skeleton, I decide that other plot-events are desirable I can insert them upon the chart in their proper places and make corresponding notes upon the smaller sheets; changing the numbers, of course, so that they will make a consecutive, or "running" story outline. Too, I can eliminate certain plot-events, as my judgment dictates; or substitute new ones for those first noted. I can even shuffle the

plot-events around, if necessary; though this is a dangerous thing to attempt, for the reason that each plot-event should grow logically out of those which have gone before.

By using this system I have found that my story grows much more easily; I have something tangible—something "down in black and white"—with which to work. I find that it stimulates the growth of the story-germ amazingly: often it seems to grow and flower almost automatically.

It may be objected that my method would tend toward machine-made yarns. In this connection let me remark that every story is "manufactured" — mechanically devised —to the extent of its inner framework. Characterization, description, dialogue—all the things that go to make a complete and interesting story, whether told upon the screen or upon the printed page—are at best merely hung upon the framework, or plot-skeleton. The skeleton, if the story is to conform to the rules which have stood the test of centuries, must be mechanically put together.

Working to prevent machine-made effects is the fact that, after the chart and sheaf of notes are complete and the time is ripe for the actual writing of the story, minor changes are usually found desirable. Rarely, as I write my story, do I go down the trunk-line without altering in some degree the plot-events. As my characters take form and substance in my mind there is ample opportunity for "inspiration" to mould the progress of the yarn; with a substantial plot framework under them, my people move about the stage largely unhampered.

The accompanying sketches will serve to show how I applied my system of plot development to a recently published story of mine, "The City of a Thousand Thieves." To save space I have represented the chart as minus a piece carrying plot-events numbered from "four" to "twenty-three." In practice I paste sheets of paper together and extend the vertical trunk-line indefinitely, as I work out the plot skeleton.



Student is Prize Winner

THE value of special training in screen technique was again amply demonstrated recently, when Mrs. Blanche Reese, of Des Moines, Iowa, was awarded first prize in a scenario contest conducted by the *Register*, of that city. Mrs Reese, who is a student of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, won out over a long list of contestants, says the contest-editor of the *Register*, largely because she expressed her plot in "picture language," while most of the other entrants—among whom were several well-known fiction writers—failed to follow the rules of photoplay technique in constructing their stories. The winning script, entitled "The Weapons of Tahaput," will be produced by a Des Moines company, with a cast composed entirely of Iowa talent.



Chicago News Contest

ANNOUNCEMENT has been made by The Chicago Daily News that a final decision in the scenario contest being conducted by that newspaper will be given on March 31st. Owing to the large number of worthwhile scripts submitted, the judges state that they have met with unusual difficulties in deciding upon the winners. Elimination, however, at the time the *Photodramatist* went to press, had reduced the contestants to forty, and the thirty-one screen dramatists will be chosen from among this number.



WRITE IT! That story lurking within your brain will never win fame or fortune until expressed in definite form.

Principles of Photoplay Construction

By H. H. Van Loan

PART II

WHY is the public so greatly interested in the famous Obenchain case? Because it is a baffling mystery and the police have not yet discovered who killed J. Belton Kennedy. This, coupled with the fact that a pretty woman is enmeshed in the story, is its excuse for the fame, or notoriety it has received. What makes the entire nation interested in the Taylor mystery? Because it is a mystery. Both the Obenchain and the Taylor cases are "different," and, anything which is unusual and out of the ordinary is interesting. Both of these stories are interesting because nobody seems to be able to solve the great mysteries which form the basis of these melodramas. As long as they remain unsolved they will be fascinating and will command the interest of the public—the great audience before whom the great dramas are being enacted. They are decidedly similar to photoplays because both seem to possess all the elements or principles of good photoplay construction. In both of these stories we find mystery, suspense, romance and plenty of action. There is genuine heart interest, which is so necessary to the successful screen story. They promise to end in thrilling climaxes, and no doubt both of these stories will have a "different" twist. The realization that the audience cannot anticipate either of these climaxes, also adds to the interest. In fact, I am of the opinion that these stories, which are being enacted in real life, are model photoplays.

Following the prescribed formula for successful photoplay writing, we shall find "The End" will be reached only when both of these mysteries have been solved. From that moment the public will manifest no more interest in the Obenchain or Taylor melodramas; the newspapers will sweep them from the front page and something else of more importance will come to occupy our thoughts. It may be the story about the rescue of a ship's crew in mid-ocean, or the announcement that a certain woman in Skewhegan, Maine, has advertised that she will sell her husband to the highest bidder, in order that she may feed her six children; but, whatever it is, you can rest assured it will have all the elements of melodrama.

The screen author who writes a story which possesses all the mystery we find in the Obenchain and Taylor cases will amuse his audience. Many of us weaken mystery stories by clearing up the mystery before we reach the final climax. Audiences don't like pictures of this sort. The public is proud enough to find a certain satisfaction in solving a mystery story, either on the screen, or in real life, before the end is reached. But at the same time it is inclined to gloat over this after it has left the theatre. I think that a very nice way to treat your audience is to encourage it in this belief and then surprise it at the finish: end the story with a "punch" which will convince the audience how far it was from guessing the climax. It is safe to estimate that every individual who has been reading the Obenchain and Taylor mystery stories has analyzed every situation and has his, or her, own opinion about these particular cases and the person or persons who committed the crimes. Unfortunately, few of them are right. But there is where fate surpasses all other writers, and, when it comes to giving a story a real different twist, old Dame Fate is mistress of her art.

The principles which life uses as the basis for all of its stories are the principles of successful photoplay construction. The writer who follows these principles will write good screen stories. The producer wants stories from life; life as it is lived today. He wants a document which is a page of our daily existence, and, these stories,

Consistent With Our

policy to spare no expense or effort in making this magazine the most authoritative and helpful publication for screen writers, The Photodramatist has engaged H. H. Van Loan to conduct a regular monthly department for its readers. This department, in which Mr. Van Loan will discuss, in a practical way, the many problems of photoplay writing, will begin with the May issue. Do not miss it!

dressed up and embellished with fiction, make the best photoplays. The producer likes stories which show us how to live; how to meet the conflicts which face us daily in all walks of life; how to fight the battles, and the best method to adopt in order to gain at least some small part of success. Life is a great struggle between the evil and good forces which exist in the world. A good photoplay is exactly the same thing. It is a contest between two great elements which are constantly waging a great conflict.

Judgment is the ability given us to know the difference between good and bad. Conscience enables us to choose between right and wrong. Religion empowers us to differentiate between sin and righteousness. And, if we reflect a moment we will admit that these form the basis of all stories whether in books, on the stage or on the screen. The screen author must have one of these objectives in mind as he writes his story or he has no legitimate excuse for writing it. A good photoplay should not only point to the error but should suggest means for preventing a repetition of it. The doctor doesn't call on his patient to tell that patient he is ill. The patient knows this and that's why he sends for the physican. The man of medicine is invited to give what knowledge he possesses to effect a cure. All of us are trying to be good; all of us possess certain bad qualities. We are willing to listen to any suggestion which seems to offer possibilities of becoming better men and women. We don't care how it is presented, and will accept it in book form, or through the medium of the stage or screen. But, we are annoyed and irritated when someone points out our faults without offering any suggestions which may improve us.

The man who steps up to the door of a convict and tells him that he is in prison because he has made an error and has ignored certain well defined laws, which, providing he had followed them, would have never led to this incarceration, is a fool. The mere fact that the man is in prison is pretty good proof that he must have made a mistake somewhere along the line, and the convict is entirely justified in turning his back on such a visitor. But, if that same caller says: "You've made a mistake, and I've come here for the purpose of helping you and preventing you from making a similar one again," that man will receive great attention from the law-breaker and he will listen. He will listen because he believes this man is going to help him.

The same idea holds good with photoplay-writing. The public objects to having its faults defined unless it can be aided in overcoming these faults in the future.

Perhaps these faults are well to bear in mind when we are writing for the screen. They certainly should be of interest to the aspiring photoplaywright, for they may get him thinking along the right line. They will assist him in learning for himself whether he has an analytical or a synthetic mind, and decide whether he has creative ability. To write a book, a play or a photoplay one has to be gifted with a synthetic and analytical mind. The grave mistake many make is that they believe they have sufficient ability, in their power to analyze. They are wrong. In order to construct we have to tear down, but there are many aspiring writers who tear down and have not the ability, or synthesis, to go ahead and build up. Therefore, it is well never to confront an audience with an evil unless we can suggest a remedy. Von Stroheim never forgets this and he never neglects handing out a cure for the evils he points out to his audience.

Of course, I do not wish to convey the thought that every story should have a moral or teach a lesson. There are many excellent stories thrown on the screen which were written and produced merely to entertain and amuse. They do not preach any doctrine or point out a moral. But, the really big productions which are heralded as the great successes of each screen season, usually carry a genuine message, and not only amuse and interest but also instruct and educate as well. And, looking back over such successes, we find that nine of the biggest productions of the past two years, which were acknowledged financial successes, were photoplays written by photodramatists who knew their screen and who wrote tailor-made stories for it. This should be an incentive to every individual who aspires to write for the screen. Life is very fascinating. The writer gets his best material from it. It is usually melodrama, because life is melodramatic, and supplies more remarkable situations, thrilling mysteries, startling climaxes and red-blooded action than the creative genius of the most inventive mind could imagine. Its romances are beautiful and alluring, and it is filled with interesting intrigues, more fascinating than could be found in fiction. This is why the writer turns to fact when he writes fiction.

Why Call It 'Photodrama'?

Two Arts, Drama and Photography, Combined in Making the Photoplay

By Theodore S. Solomons

TERMS never become "set" in our language unless they have been found to better express, to more nearly define, the idea for which they stand than any other single term. The compound word *photodrama* well exemplifies this truth.

So well, indeed, that I venture to say its parts represent the two cardinal principles upon which the successful screen story must be constructed—it must be photographable and it must be dramatic. There are many other qualities revealed by an analysis of the photoplay, but all of them put together fail to reach the importance of these two. Hence it is that the two words that best express them have come to be the favorite terms for the vehicle of the art.

When human beings have devised a method of representing the interesting features of life, in which conversation and music will be properly represented, and the stage will shift, as it does in life and in the photodrama—all over the country, if the characters move all over the country—in this ideal "play" of the future, bodied forth by many arts, we shall have no two cardinal principles but as many as there are cardinal principles in all of the arts.

But in the photoplay of today, limited as it is to images flashed on a flat screen, we are rigidly conditioned in the vehicle of the art—the story that is told as the film is unreeled. Aside from the artificial device of the titles and subtitles, of which the less the better, we can express no more than the flashed pantomine and its settings.

Logically, then, we are confronted by two major difficulties; the one a mechanical difficulty—the necessity of photographing each and every part of the thing that is to be depicted, and the other a difficulty common to all of the graphic arts, inherent interestingness. There is a constant potential conflict between these two necessities—the necessity of photographing everything that must be represented to tell completely the story, and the necessity, conversely, of representing the thought and feeling which is the real, informing substance and essence of the story, no matter how difficult it may be to do so photographically. In short, it must be dramatic and yet it must be photographic. They are cardinal precepts.

There is no possible way in which these two necessities can be reconciled if we select for representation a story any vital part of which presents insuperable difficulties to graphic art. Selection, therefore, is the prime requisite of the photoplaywright. He must not handicap himself in his story. Half the battle is won in the avoidance of the hard-to-photograph. All story essence, all drama, is alike in this, that the main interest we feel in it resides in the inner workings of the mind and heart. But there is a striking difference in stories in respect to the feasibility with which that inner working of mind and heart may be exposed to the on-looker in the pantomime and its settings. Remember that it is not the story as you write it, not the synopsis, not even the "Maud registers" this feeling or idea, that you are offering to the producer of the photoplay. Your script is merely the written out description of the real thing you offer, which is a recipe—a series of directions—for the production of a series of photographs. There must be *conversion* of your synopsis before it is of the slightest value, and it must be convertible before there can be conversion. Hence your description—and hence the whole story—must be the description (if it could make it) of the camera's eye. You must be a camera from the very moment you start the conception of your drama-story. It is true enough that often what at first seems unscreenable

(*Continued on Page 38*)

Theodore S. Solomons

speaks with authority when he discusses the subject of photoplay writing. Besides being a fiction writer of note, he is the author of many successful original screen stories. His views, as expressed in the accompanying article, are certain to be of help to any photodramatist who considers them carefully.

IN THE FOREGROUND

Being a Department of Brief Chats on Topics Within The Camera's Range

"Pure as Snow."

WE must confess to being somewhat intrigued by a statement recently credited in the Columbus (Ohio) *Citizen* to Mrs. Evelyn F. Snow, "czarina" of the O h i o State Board of Censorship.

"I am going to give the people of Ohio the sort of pictures they *should have*," Mrs. Snow is reported as saying; "not the pictures they may *want*."

Fortunate indeed is the commonwealth of Ohio! Not every state can boast of numbering such an omniscient prescient moral guardian among its population; not every state possesses a woman or man who can view a motion picture and forecast, accurately, the reaction that its showing would have upon the millions of citizens whom she or he represents.

On second thought, however, we desire to apologize for the misuse of the word "represents." Undoubtedly Mrs. Snow must represent a certain portion of the people of her state—else she could have never attained to her present position,—but, nevertheless, we are loath to believe that she represents even a large minority of the public she is supposed to serve—but to whom, it would seem, she has become not a servant, but a dictator.

Unless Ohio has lost its fine ideals of American citizenship, there must be a large number of its people who resent Mrs. Snow's high-handed attitude as a positive intrusion upon their rights under the Constitution of the United States. There must be a few thinking persons with temerity enough to believe that they are entitled to such entertainment as they *want*—and not to what one, weak mortal believes they *should have*. There must be intelligent men and women in Ohio who doubt that Mrs. Snow is fitted—either by education or inherent mental powers—to decide, better than they, what is good for their moral well-being.

Were Mrs. Snow humbly to admit that she is a servant of the people, and, as such, endeavoring merely to carry on her work in a manner pleasing to those to whom she is responsible, no one could question her integrity or her fitness as a public appointee—however much one might disagree with censorship. But her tacit admission that she has no intention of listening to the wishes of the people—that she will not administer her position as they may desire but as she herself thinks she should administer it—stamps her as one unfit to hold any office within the gift of free American citizens.

The editor of *The Photodramatist* is old-fashioned enough to cling to the antiquated idea that Mrs. Snow, or anyone else elected or appointed to a public office, should conduct the affairs of that office to please the public, and that her own views are matters of secondary importance, which she has no right whatsoever to bring into her official life. We grant, however, that the very principles of censorship make it almost impossible for a censor to steer clear of personal prejudice in performing his, or her, duties.

Pursuing Mrs. Snow's belief that she is appointed to give her *employers* "pictures they should have—not what they want" to its logical conclusion, we presume that American business men will soon be taking dictation from their stenographers, and that the average office boy will presently be culling the morning mail to eliminate therefrom any communications which he may deem injurious to the boss' morals, however much the boss may feel that he is paying the salaries and is entitled to read the sort of letters he wants to read.

Within a period of one week, the board headed, and dominated, by the omniscient Mrs. Snow ordered eliminations made in thirty-two reels of film, out of one hundred and thirty that were examined. A complete list of the films that were deleted is not available at this writing, but we do know that among the pictures that were ordered cut, or rejected entirely, were Goldwyn's "Sin Flood," one of the most powerful preachments of modern times; "Three Live Ghosts," Paramount's whimsical delightful comedy; and "Law and the Woman," a picture which points a strong moral and should certainly not be harmful to any person possessing even the lowest order of intelligence. If the other decisions by Mrs. Snow and her cohorts were as ridiculous as these, it is no wonder that the producers—who are hundreds of thousands of dollars out of pocket by virtue of such irresponsible tyranny

—as well as the people, who are being robbed of legitimate entertainment and thrust *en toto* into the adolescent class, are surging with indignation.

Readers of *The Photodramatist* should bear in mind, at all times, that Ohio is but one of several states in which such a condition exists. Appointed originally under the pretense of barring licentious pictures from exhibition, the censors have gone to such absurd lengths—have extended their power to such a grotesque point—that the morality, or immorality, of the films has long since ceased to be the question. New York censors, for instance, evidently faring that the public might gain an insight into conditions that exist in the Empire State, recently barred "The Night Rose," a picture embodying a sweeping indictment of rotten politics in New York City—although the same film was passed without question by other state boards. Similarly, Will Hart's "The Whistle,"—a picture showing life in the mills—was banned in Pennsylvania, by a board evidently catering to "big money," on the grounds that it would stir up class prejudice. The same film—which is as clean, morally, as any ever made, was endorsed by a number of other boards of censorship as being not in the least objectionable.

We have, then, the pitiful spectacle of supposedly free Americans being forbidden to see a film in New York, which other free Americans may view with impunity—and without injury to their morals—in Ohio or Pennsylvania. By the same token, a film that might ruin the commonwealth of Pennsylvania (judging from the ruling of that state's censors) seems to have no harmful effects upon New Yorkers or residents of Massachusetts. At least, their appointed moral guardians assure them that it won't. And, woven throughout the warp and woof of his web of hypocrisy, deceit, ignorance, conceit and fanaticism in the big states, are thousands of similarly conflicting decisions by the myriad smaller boards of censorship that have sprung up all over the country. No two make the same decisions, no two have the same ideas. To the censor, in the farming district, who has never seen a cultured woman in evening dress, a decollete gown is the height of immorality; to Mrs. John Alden, Boston blue-blood, who considers an evening gown but a necessary part of life, a scene depicting a litter of suckling pigs enjoying their afternoon meal is probably more or less revolting and something which she would ban in a picture production. No two persons can see the world through the same eyes; no two persons react the same to similar situations. And no two boards of censorship can ever hope to agree.

America is a republic. As citizens of this country, we are presumed to be free moral agents, within, of course, certain broad bounds of ordinary decency which are fully prescribed by fundamental laws of the land. Undoubtedly a majority of Americans do not want censorship. But those who do are well organized and tireless workers. Unless readers of *The Photodramatist* wish to see a "Mrs. Snow"—with all she represents—in each of their respective states, it behooves them to enter now into the fight against this insidious menace to the rights that were guaranteed to us all by the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Quantity Production

THIS being an age of standardization—of quantity production, of "quick sales and big profits"—it is not surprising that inexperienced photoplay writers often fall into the error of attempting to "speed up" in the preparation of their product. One hears constantly of "schedules"—so many thousand words per day, so many finished photodramas each month. But it is significant that one hears also the constant cry, "Why are my scenarios rejected?"

Were it possible to turn out worthwhile scenarios on the quantity production basis, to anticipate the vagaries of the creative mind, and to assure a definite output which could be sold at a fixed price, some Henry Ford of the motion picture world would long since have gathered unto himself all the capable writers in the profession, contracted with the producers for their annual requirements, and thus have closed the market to the free-lance. However, the writing of screen drama is an art—and Art is something which cannot be measured in terms of efficiency charts, nor controlled by the time-clock system.

Admitting that certain well known authors have achieved success by using the "schedule" system, we do not believe that it is a practical method for the average photoplay writer. Indeed, it was not until these same successful authors had gained the heights, and had assured themselves of a following and consequently a definite market for their output, that they settled into the so-many-words-a-day rut. As a rule,—the case of Jack London is an excellent example,—their later work lacks the virility, and originality, of their earlier efforts.

"I do my best work when I write hurriedly, when I force myself to a definite daily stipend," one ambitious photodramatist wrote us recently. "Why is it that I am continually advised to work slowly?"

"Why is it," I asked him in my reply, "that none of your stories has ever appeared upon the screen?" He took the hint. Not long afterward he made his first sale—and it was a big one, too.

When we advise against hurried, mechanical writing, however, we do not wish to be mistaken for an advocate of the "wait-for-the-mood" sys-

tem. Waiting for the proper "mood" quickly gets to be a habit, and the moments of inspiration are prone to become more and more elusive. In the work of scenario writing—as in every other profession—there is a sane, practical middle road. Woo the Muse—but do not attempt to drag her into your workshop by the hair of her head. Woo her diligently, as many hours a day as you think necessary. You will find that, although somewhat coy at first, as time goes by, she will boldly enter your study. On the other hand, any veteran scenario writer will tell you that no self-respecting Muse will come to one's aid uninvited.

What's In a Name?

HUMORISTS find a wealth of material in the names with which many mothers have burdened their children. Not being able to foresee on the date of christening, just the sort of person her child will develop into in the years to come, the fond mother must take a chance. Generally, she selects a cognomen which would be suitable for someone who represents her ideal, and trusts that a kind Providence will see to it that she has not chosen wrongly. Providence, however, seems to possess a rare, and obstinate, sense of humor. An Algernon sprouts into six-feet-two of bulky manhood; a Violet develops a raucous voice, wears "flapper" clothes and goes into the chorus; Michael ceases to expand when he tips the scales at a hundred and twenty pounds and shows a decided preference for Djer Kiss perfume; Patrick Henry blushes every time someone calls upon him for a speech; while young John Wesley spends his Sabbath days in swinging a bat at the ball park.

The photodramatist, fortunately, is not thus handicapped in selecting names for his brain children. He knows in advance just the sort of characters they are. He is aware that his "heavy" is certain to steal the papers and eventually land in the penitentiary; that the handsome hero is bound to thwart his unscrupulous enemies and to win the girl; that the deacon in his play is a miserly old soul; and that the bank president is going to aid the deacon in his shrewd schemes. Being thus forearmed, the screen writer can impose upon these characters titles befitting the traits that distinguish them.

Unfortunately, although the screen writer *can* do this, there are times when he does not. The handsome hero, is, more often than not, burdened with the name of Scraggs; the winsome ingenue bears the grotesque—for her—title of Maggie; the slick deacon blossoms forth as Mr. Herbert Goodman; the unscrupulous banker signs to the evilly worded documents of his underhanded schemes the cognomen, David Worthington.

The naming of characters is almost an art itself—and one which photoplay writers should study assiduously. A name should be distinctive in a number of ways; it should fit the person who bears it; and it should never be bizarre or fantastic, excepting, possibly, in the most farcical of farce comedies. The well-grounded photoplaywright will never have two names that closely resemble each other in the same cast; and he will remember, always, that each name must suggest, or connote, the dominant trait of character of the person who bears it.

Laying the Foundation

FREQUENTLY, in photoplay synopses written by untrained writers, there appear sentences similar to this one: "Jerry Adamson, entering a cave, finds a pair of riding gloves which he knows belonged to his mysteriously murdered father, and instantly realizes that Indian Joe and his gang, who make the cave their rendezvous, must have committed the crime." Fully ninety per cent of the writers who employ such a device for the unfolding of their plot neglect, however, to "establish" these gloves—or whatever the article may be—in some earlier part of the story, or to indicate just why it is that the hero should know that the gloves in question were the property of the man upon whose death the plot hinges.

Failure to lay proper foundation for the introduction of such an incident must inevitably weaken one's photoplay. Indeed, in a large number of instances, such a flaw is serious enough to bring about the rejection of a story that, otherwise, might have found editorial favor. It is difficult, of course, to construct a photoplay plot so mechanically perfect that defects of this sort do not appear therein. But if the aspiring photodramatist desires to gain ultimate success, he must be as painstaking in the preparation of his product as a contractor is in the erection of a structure. A skyscraper, in the building of which an important steel beam was left out, could not pass the tests of a municipal inspector. The scenario that is lacking in proper technical construction will not gain the approval of the producer who must invest a fortune in the filming thereof.



"Nor Lose the Common Touch"

Story That Sounds the "Human Note" Will be Both Artistic and Box-Office Success

By Katherine R. O'Keefe

THE chief essential for a successful photoplay—the great, compelling, forceful thing that must pervade—is the human note. "Heart Interest," "Compelling Characterization," "Understanding of Life"—in terms, such as these, have the master minds, the great director-producers, set forth their various answers as to what constitutes the most important principle of scenario writing. In phrasings, in wording, in the telling of the thing, perhaps they have differed. Basically, they agree, and their different demands may be summed up in the one word, "humanness."



Why have some pictures been both artistic and financial failures? Why have others ranked as huge successes? These questions have been answered many times, in many different ways. We believe, however, that Miss O'Keefe strikes the keynote when she states that "humanness" is the dominant characteristic of every play that has reached the heart of the public.

Oh, we must have theme, we must have climax, conflict—to be a success we must, no matter what the field chosen, acquire technique, an understanding of fundamentals, but the mere mastering of the working rules of the game is not sufficient when one seeks the heights in the realm of Art and the Photodrama is Art—the New Art, no longer on probation, but overwhelmingly triumphant.

Sounding the human note—there's the story in its entirety—the picturing of the little struggles of every day, the brave silences, oftimes wholly pathetic, the smiles, the tears, the gold, the clay—which make up the lives of all of us.

And humanness means realism too—there must be that— not a sordid, stark, brutal facing of facts— that the very thing, be our attitude, cowardly or wise, in this regard, that, in real life, we don't do. As Schopenhauer has so aptly put it—"the fabric of social life is interwoven with a multitude of delicate evasions, of small hypocrisies, of matters of tinsel sentiment; social intercourse would be impossible, were this not so." That's the thing the so-called realists too often forget — realism needn't be drab and ugly. It can be—it many more times is, then isn't, beautiful, splendidly so.

May I not, in passing, pay tribute to the Master Realist of the screen — I refer to William de Mille. His "What Every Woman Knows," "The Lost Romance," "After the Show" were gems of beauty. I would recommend a careful study of such as these to every aspiring young playwright in the land (along with a copy of "Martin Eden," that he may the better know the stony paths which must be trod ere the heights be reached). For the elder De Mille knows life—knows and understands as it is given but few to understand. He, in truth, of them all, sounds the human note. His characters are carved from the stuff of which we are all made. Cleanliness there is, too, in his drama—the baser, uglier things, shadowed subtly; and, somehow, even the baseness, the transgressions,

we are led to understand, and, because of this understanding, to forgive, even though we cannot justify.

We, Americans, have been criticized, time without end, for our insistent demand, reminiscent of childish fairy story days, that our drama, our novels, our photoplays, be bright and cheery of tone and that endings inevitably be happy, and yet—our demand is a legitimate one. So much of life is just that in this great new center of civilization. Again, we show our demand for realism. Life, for us, is not the tragic struggle, so often the story of lives in the old world. Tragic, miserable lives are the exception among us—not the rule.

Much has been written, by way of warning to the embryo photodramatist, that the big thing upon which he must center is the "Box Office Appeal" of his theme. Write, these sages suggest, with the "Box Office" ever in mind. Forget Art; give the public the "hokum"—they fall for it always. Their advice is, tersely then: "Leave Art behind all ye who enter the realm of Photoplay writing." To justify this assumption they remind you that such pictures as "Sentimental Tommy," "The Golem," gems of artistry, have failed to "get by," while maudlin, sentimental affairs of the "meller" quality, have prospered. Yet these sages, for all their wisdom, have overlooked a certain thesis—the public, even though at times we writhe and groan at the sort of thing it takes to its bosom, is not the feebly indiscriminating body so many producers seem to think. The public has always, will always, worship at the shrine of Art, provided,—and herein lies the story,—provided the artistic creation, no matter what the form it take, is pregnant with all pervading humanness, "The Birth of a Nation," "The Miracle Man," "The Four Horsemen,"—all these are but proof of this.

"Sentimental Tommy," despite its delightful settings, its masterly direction, despite the splendid portrayal of Gareth Hughes, and here I may perhaps call down upon my head the wrath of its mighty throng of worshippers, lacked the "common touch." To those of us who love and know Barrie, it was a thing of rare delight—to the vast movie audiences, who did not know, consequently did not love the whimsical Scot, "Sentimental Tommy" seemed but an insipid, foolish affair without any apparent reason for being. "Tommy" was to them a sort of eerie, will-o'-the-wisp person whom they did not understand—he was not like themselves, not like anyone whom they'd ever know. One got this from remarks of disgruntled ones, here and there throughout the audience. One member of the sterner sex, sitting directly back of me, announced vehemently to his companion, that in real life "'Sentimental Tommy' was the kind of a guy one would like to kill."

And the story of "Sentimental Tommy" has often been the story of other superb artistic things which have failed to satisfy the multitude—beautiful, gloriously beautiful, they have been—a delight to the mind, attuned and alive to their beauty: but they have lacked "that something" which could reach the heart, and it's the heart that must be reached. Heart interest, human interest, the public demands. They prefer "hokum" any time to the Art that leaves them cold.

Let the thing you do, then, soar to what heights it may. Make each story a glorious thing from the standpoint of artistry. Let it be a thing of fire, of all-compelling beauty of theme and, withal, let it ring true to life and the real things of life; let its people be the folks of every day, and let there be tolerance, understanding of the struggles, the pitfalls along this path of every day, and I say to you, that you will have found the one great thing which makes for success as a photodramatist.

For when one comes to love and understand his fellows, he has his hand on the great pulse of this mighty multitude whom we have termed "the public," and he writes then the things that that public can understand.



A PHOTOPLAY without "conflict" resembles a painting done in white pigment, on a white background.

FAITH without work will avail nothing. Belief in one's ability as a writer is useless—unless one writes.

From Pen to Silversheet

By Melvin M. Riddle

V—PROPERTIES

WHAT is a prop?

Upon the definition of this little word hinges the immensity of the task of the property department of any large modern film producing plant, for the work of such a department is to obtain the necessary props or properties used in the settings which form the backgrounds for the pictures.

The little word "prop" is perhaps about as general a term as is to be found in the English language, for anything under the sun that is handled by the players or used before the camera in connection with a motion picture scene, comes within its scope. Neither a circus elephant, a railway coach or a wedding ring are necessarily props until they are used in a scene in a motion picture, but when so used they immediately come under that classification.

The importance and difficulty of the work of the property department lies in the wide variety of articles that may be so used and the effort required to locate and secure such articles.

According to Howard Wells, chief of props at the Lasky studio in Hollywood, and whose department has been reported the most complete, comprehensive and representative in filmland, the property man must strike the word "can't" from his vocabulary. He may not know where he is to secure an article for a picture, at the time it is requested, but he must make it a point to know as soon as possible and to go and get it. There is perhaps no other vocation in industry wherein one is better trained to "deliver the goods."

In order to achieve this vital aim, the chief of the department and his men are ever on the alert. They don't wait until something is requested before they start looking for it. They always strive to be a little ahead of the game. They get a line upon everything which they think will ever be used as a prop and enter it in their index. They never miss an opportunity. If they see a strange vehicle, an unusual antique or anything else which isn't on their lists, they get all possible information concerning such an article, where it may be found at a moment's notice and put that information down in black and white in the department files. Only a few weeks ago, Mr. Wells, while driving in the business section of Los Angeles, saw a Ford taxicab of the 1913 model. He noted immediately that it possessed a very unusual feature—that despite its age, it looked almost new, having received excellent care and perhaps little usage. The value of such a condition lay in the fact that pictures are often produced wherein the action supposedly transpires some years ago, but in which new or almost new properties are required. Thus, the property must be physically new, yet it must be suited to the period of time in which the action takes place. According to Mr. Wells, he chased the taxicab for twelve blocks and finally caught it. He obtained the address where it might be obtained, a description of the car and entered it on his index. Not more than two weeks later just such a car was needed for Paramount picture. Without any difficulty the machine was secured and rented.

Thus, in the studio department, there are two property indexes. One is a list of the properties on hand in the prop room, naming, describing and numbering something like sixty-five thousand items, and the other a list of obtainable props, much larger than the first list, and which contains all necessary information about properties not on hand but which may be secured on short notice. This list includes a ridiculous variety of entries, ranging from trained

"Fine Feathers

make fine birds," runs the old saying. Just so, do fine settings help to make fine pictures. Mr. Riddle's article on "properties" will give to readers of The Photodramatist an interesting insight into the great care taken in "dressing" the photoplay. There'll be another one next month!

monkeys, snakes and canary birds to false teeth.

One of the largest props on record and which is entered on this latter list, is a circus. Some months ago, Mr. Wells received orders from a certain director to get him a complete circus. He located a circus on tour, the director conformed his schedule to accommodate the time of its arrival in the city, and the circus, upon arriving, was engaged in its entirety for two days.

As soon as the script is finished by the scenario department, the property man's work begins. Each separate producing company has a property man who works right with the staff. This man makes out what is known as a property plot. Mr. Wells and his staff make out another plot and the two are compared. From this a complete, final property plot or list is evolved. This list then serves as the guide sheet for the department as to what will be needed in the picture in the way of properties and the men begin work immediately to locate and produce everything on the list. The property division is also responsible for the furnishings, draperies and decorations for the setting. Some of the furnishings are in stock, but many of them have to be rented.

As an example of some of the unusual properties which a department is sometimes called upon to provide, some of the items on the prop list for Wallace Reid's Paramount picture, "Too Much Speed," are cited. This was an automobile race story and among other things, eight fast racing cars, each capable of attaining a speed of more than eighty miles per hour, were required. To pilot these eight cars, it was necessary to find eight experienced racing pilots, to insure a minimum of danger to all concerned. Four of the cars were secured from Mr. Fred Dusenberg of the Dusenberg Motor Company, who was at that time on the coast for a big race meet. These cars were all regular racing entries. Four famous pilots were engaged to drive them. Then four more pilots were signed, each of whom had his own car. Another item called for enough machines to completely stock an automobile show room. For this, trucks, touring cars, coupes, roadsters and sedans were rented.

The value of the articles in the department is an interesting phase. Like the stock in the wardrobe, as described in a previous story of this series, the properties might be said to have two values—one computed from a cold commercial standpoint, and the other contingent upon the usefulness of the articles to the studio and the amount of labor and time that has perhaps been expended in securing them. Mr. Wells recalled having once spent six dollars in automobile hire and about thirty dollars' worth of time in locating an old frayed ladies' purse, which would be worth about twenty-five cents to the junk dealer.

Many of the rented properties are very valuable and a great deal of care is exercised in handling them and returning them to the original source in the same condition in which they were received. In "The Great Moment," a Paramount picture starring Gloria Swanson, something like twenty-two thousand dollars worth of properties were rented.

The research department lends valuable aid to the property department in outlining the kind of furnishings or properties required, to be in keeping with certain periods or locales. As the industry has advanced, audiences have become more discriminating and now demand realism in the smallest details. A few years ago, many fake props and makeshifts were used, but now no effort or expense is spared in finding the genuine.

The property room at the Lasky studio contains many interesting and unique features. There is a complete compartment where are stored what are known as "hand props." Here are to be found all varieties of small and valuable properties, ranging from a Chinese violin to a wooden leg. On the second floor is a complete arsenal, containing all kinds of guns, past and present. In another branch are twenty thousand books, which disseminate all varieties of knowledge and fiction from Stoic philosophy to the family medical adviser, or the White House cook book. In another section are stored enough labelled liquor bottles of different varieties to make a saloon keeper's collection look sick. Then there is the drapery department, where fancy drapes and materials of all kinds are wrought into beautiful hangings and upholstery by skilled artists. At the shipping room, several trucks are kept busy every day transporting rented props to and from the studio. The prop making shop is a large machine shop where skilled mechanics make every conceivable property and effect which the property men are unable to obtain elsewhere. This is only a smattering of the interesting things to be found in this unique department. To tell all would require volumes.

The Guild Forum

A monthly department devoted to the interests of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America, the official organization of recognized photodramatists and studio staff writers.

By Alfred Hustwick

The Screen Writers' Guild

OFFICERS

Frank E. Woods, President.
June Mathis, Vice-President.
Eugene Presbrey, Treasurer and Executive Secretary.
Dwight Cleveland, Recording Secretary.

Executive Committee

The officers and Thompson Buchanan, Elmer Harris, Lucien Hubbard, Jeanie MacPherson, Frederick Palmer, Milton Schwartz, Rob Wagner.

Estimating the Damage

THE flood of vicious publicity assailing the motion picture industry and its people and libelling the cinema capital, Hollywood, has already subsided, thanks largely to the efforts of the Guild's publicity committee. The counter-movement initiated by the Guild is being actively and intelligently directed towards the re-building of a favorable public opinion based upon the truth as revealed by a patient and exhaustive examination of the facts. It is, perhaps, too early to predict complete success of these efforts in obtaining the desired results, but it is not too early to estimate the extent of the damage which has been done by irresponsible newspaper correspondents who have exploited Hollywood and the picture people without regard to generally accepted ideas of honesty and common decency.

The Guild's publicity committee has secured exchanges from all parts of the country which reveal the enormous damage which the syndicated stories, sent out by a handful of newspaper men who found themselves at a loose end in Los Angeles, have wrought to public confidence. These articles, bordering in most cases upon ordinary filth and containing less than one-tenth of one per cent of fact, were so sensational in character, and were so shrewdly offered at such an opportune time, that hundreds of newspapers, some of them rated among the best in the country, eagerly seized upon them as "hot stuff" and blazoned them in nauseating headliners across their first pages. Even among the more conservative newspapers there were many that, after vainly struggling against the lure of the dollar and the competition of unprincipled opponents, felt that they were compelled to sacrifice their dignity and publish, although in a less sensational manner, a daily dish of revolting and unfounded stories purporting to tell of "the wild night life in Hollywood" and other spicy—and non-existent—happenings. So far and wide was this publicity spread that it is safe to say that scarcely a man or woman—and probably the children must be included—in these United States, failed to read or hear of the alleged wickedness of Hollywood and the motion picture people. Of course there were some newspapers and periodicals that preserved their self-respect in the face of a stampeded public opinion and indignantly protested against the condemnation of a great industry and some sixty or seventy thousand people upon a trumped-up charge, and without a hearing. But most newspapers and most people, in the month of February, either believed, or professed to believe, that Hollywood had Sodom and Gomorrah completely "faded," and that the chief occupation of motion picture people, in and out of studios, was inventing new sins to enjoy.

The Guild's Efforts

Because the Guild had studied and foreseen just such a result of the Arbuckle and Taylor cases, which had completely fizzled out from the news standpoint and had left a number of newspaper correspondents on the Coast with nothing to justify their employers in continuing to give the vacations in California's sunny clime, the organization and operation of its publicity campaign was quickly accomplished. Acting in conjunction with Hollywood business and social clubs, and the Chamber of Commerce, the Guild quickly set its publicity committee to work compiling facts about Hollywood and the morals of motion picture people. Police statistics were exhaustively studied, the wild yarns in the newspapers were carefully scrutinized upon off-chance that some visiting newspaper man might have unearthed a condition that not even the old-timers in the industry could discover; every effort was made to get at the TRUTH, so that nothing to which the Guild might lend its name could possibly be questioned.

A campaign of constructive publicity was launched by the full committee and a number of articles were prepared by members, under the general caption, "The Truth About Hollywood." These articles, including ones from such well-known people as Frank E. Woods, president of the Guild; Thompson Buchanan, chairman of the Guild Club, "The Writers," Sir Gilbert Par-

ker, Beulah Marie Dix, Rob Wagner, William Parker, Louis Sherwin, Evelyn Campbell, and Milton Schwartz, were offered by telegraph to newspapers all over the United States and to some newspapers in Canada. As soon as the preliminary work was accomplished, the Guild installed a special bureau to continue its campaign of education and, whenever an examination of the exchanges received showed that any certain newspaper had given space to sensational lies about Hollywood and the industry, that paper was queried and an offer made to supply the facts.

Results came quickly. Just as the newspapers had followed each other like sheep in accepting the syndicated rubbish sent out by the traducers of the industry, many of them quickly swung into line behind the bigger newspapers which, for the sake of their reputations, felt themselves obligated to publish the truth when it was offered them. After the first few articles had received publication the Guild's bureau was inundated with requests for more; newspapers of every size, shape and description, confessed that they had been deceived—"bunked" is the way one big publisher puts it—and it became evident that the press of the country, once convinced that Hollywood and its people had received a "raw deal," stood ready to give it a hearing, if no more.

At the present writing the situation is most hopeful. Many newspapers have sent their own correspondents to investigate conditions in cinema-land. Without exception the reports of these correspondents have completely refuted the unspeakable slanders first printed. At the present time Hollywood's 70,000 inhabitants have with them some fifty or sixty correspondents revelling in the physical, social and civic charms of the lovely foothill suburb, and asking themselves how such a place and such home-loving, home-keeping people could ever be the victims of a poisoned pen. Kenneth C. Beaton (K.C.B.), George Ade, Montague Glass and many other literary lights have written special stories, highly laudatory, and based on first-hand observation. The Guild's bureau is gradually reaching the far-off corners of the country where the truth about Hollywood is yet to be told, and there is every reason to believe that before another month is passed public confidence in the men and women of the industry and in the sincerity of their art and ideals will be largely restored.

The Federation of Art

It must not be inferred from the foregoing that the Guild has been the only motion picture organization that has done its rightful part in combatting lies and slanders. Its work has, perhaps, been more effective and far-reaching than that of any other body, but that is to be expected from an organization of writers whose medium is the same as that through which the attack upon the industry was conducted, namely, the printed page.

The various organizations representing the actors, the directors, the cinematographers, studio electricians, and others, have all done their bits and co-operated manfully. Out of this co-operation has come something which will undoubtedly have a more beneficial influence upon the art and industry of the cinema and the attitude of the public towards them, than anything we have yet witnessed. It was this union of related, though heretofore separated, organizations, all devoted to the welfare of the motion picture art, which was foreshadowed in last month's article by the writer. What this new organization is and what it stands for is explained by the following official announcement:

"The organization of The Federation of Art has been undertaken for the purpose of dealing with situations which are apt to become a menace to the good name of the industry and to take cognizance of any and all things which are for the general welfare. Those bodies which constitute the Federation are:

"The Actors' Equity Association (Western Branch).

"The American Society of Cinematographers.

"The Motion Picture Directors' Association.

"The Screen Writers' Guild of The Authors' League of America.

"The Writers' Club at 6716 Sunset Boulevard is temporary headquarters. The following is part of the publicity which has already been sent out under authorization of the Federation:

"We, the great mass of decent people who really create the motion pictures, do pledge ourselves that we will not act with, we will not photograph, we will not direct and we will not write for, any individual who has brought disgrace upon the profession, or whose personal conduct is such as to risk bringing disgrace upon the profession." Such is the slogan of the Federation of Art.

"Outraged by the scandalous attacks that have been made upon their profession, and exasperated by the behavior of the disreputable handful that has provoked these attacks, this new and important federation has been organized to foster a spirit of professional pride and honor, and to eliminate all persons who are a menace to the good repute of the people engaged in the cinema art.

"The new Federation announces that it is thoroughly organized and in every way capable of dealing with any situation of this kind which

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Gossip Street

From Hollywood Boulevard to Times Square



C. GARDNER SULLIVAN'S latest photoplay is entitled "Someone to Love." It is now under production at the Ince Studios.

"THIS WAY OUT" is the third original that Carey Wilson has recently sold to Goldwyn.

EMILE FORST'S latest story, "Vows That May Be Broken," has been secured by the Fox Film Corporation as a starring vehicle for Dustin Farnum.

EVERY former newspaper man now a member of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America has been assigned to write a newspaper or magazine article on "The Truth About Hollywood." These articles are not a defense of Hollywood, but are a campaign of enlightenment. Among those who have contributed are Rob Wagner, Waldemar Young, Thompson Buchanan, William Parker, and Jack Cunningham.

"DOUBLE FISTED," an original story by Leo Meehan and Henry McCarthy, will be used for Lester Cuneo's next picture.

EUGENE B. LEWIS, of long experience as a newspaper man, scenario editor, and writer of original photoplays, has been engaged by the Palmer Photoplay Corporation to head their Advisory Bureau. Some of Mr. Lewis's stories are: "Three Mountain Men," "Roped," "What Every Woman Learns," "The Love Special," and "The Little Clown."

VIOLET CLARK has been engaged by the Goldwyn Studio to make the screen adaptation of Carey Wilson's original photoplay, "This Way Out." Miss Clark made the screen versions of "The Truth About Husbands," "The Foolish Age," and many other successful photoplays.

RUPERT HUGHES'S latest story is "The Bitterness of Sweets." Besides writing the story and the continuity, he will personally direct it.

HANNAH HINSDALE has just received word from the sales department of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation that her story, "Cinderella With a Difference," has been sold to William Fox.

LEGALIZED censorship in Virginia was defeated largely through the efforts of the National Board of Review, which organization sent a special representative to speak on the evils of censorship before the Virginia Senate Committee.

MRS. FRANCES WHITE ELIJAH, manager of the New York branch of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation recently delivered a speech on scenario writing over the radio telephone, the message being transmitted to a large number of towns within a radius of several hundred miles of New York City.

"CLEAN UP SUDDEN," is the name of a story Tom Mix and Lyn Reynolds have just finished. Work will be started on this soon at the Fox studios.

"THE GUILTY OATH," a western drama by George Morgan, will be Tom Santschi's next starring vehicle.

"SECOND HAND ROSE," based on the popular song, will appear in the films. The story was prepared by A. P. Younger, of Lucien Hubbard's Universal scenario staff.

ROB WAGNER'S photoplay, "R. S. V. P.," in which Charles Ray stars, is achieving great success.

L. V. JEFFERSON has produced his own story, "The Forest King." It is said Mr. Jefferson worked on the plot of this story for five years before he completed it to his satisfaction.

"ACCORDING TO HOYLE" is the next picture in which David Butler will star. The story was written by Clyde Westover and Lottie Horner.

"A MAN OF ACTION," an original screen story by Bradley King, is to be Thomas H. Ince's next special comedy production. Bradley King's other story, "Jim," is to be released under the title of "The Man She Married."

"THE TROOPER," an original by A. P. Younger, will be Gladys Walton's next starring vehicle.

EARL WAYLAND BOWMAN, author of "The Ramblin' Kid," has been signed by Metropolitan Productions, Inc., to furnish a series of stories featuring James B. Warner.

JULIEN JOSEPHSON, one of the best known screen writers in the profession, is now a member of Frank E. Wood's staff at Lasky studio.

NOVELS may hereafter be written from film plays, instead of the opposite procedure. Clyde Westover and Lottie Horner have been commissioned to novelize their original photoplay, "The Man From Downing Street." Eric Von Stroheim is writing a novelized version of "Foolish Wives."

JOHNSTON McCULLEY has written "Further Adventures of the Zorro" for Douglas Fairbanks.

A SCORE of years ago Beulah Marie Dix of the Lasky scenario staff sold her first story for $10.00 and her first play for $15.00. Needless to say, the recompense of Miss Dix was decidedly higher for her most recent work, the script of "The Ordeal," an original story by W. Somerset Maugham, which will be an early Agnes Ayres Paramount picture. With scores of magazines and motion picture firms competing for stories, try to buy one nowadays for $10.00.

"YELLOW MEN AND GOLD," and "Whims of The Gods," photoplays based on originals by Gouverneur Morris, will soon be released.

VIRGINIA TRACY, who wrote "Queen of Sheba," and is co-author of "Nero," both William Fox specials, is also the adapter of "The Shepherd King," which is now being produced by Fox in Egypt.

LOUIS STEVENS has just had the good fortune, even in these hard times, to sell three stories all at one "pop." One of them is called "The Woman Breed," and is to serve as a vehicle for no less famous a star than Pauline Frederick. The others have been purchased by Victor L. Schertzinger. They are, "Dollar Devils" and "The Kingdom of the Blind."

"EXTRA! EXTRA!" Julien Josephson's latest story, was recently filmed at Fox Studios. Another original by this writer is "Watch Your Step," in which Cullen Landis is being featured.

"THE MAN WITH TWO MOTHERS," an original photoplay by Alice Duer Miller, will present Mary Alden in a mother role similar to that which brought her fame in "The Old Nest."

A DECIDED novelty is "Whims of the Gods," which formerly answered to the name of "What Ho—the Cook!" It is a Chinese fantasy created especially for the screen by Gouverneur Morris and is said to introduce a new angle in story telling.

FERDINAND EARLE has come out ahead in the celebrated Rubaiyat controversy

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The Guild Forum

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may arise. Compared with other professions and lines of industry, cases of scandalous behaviour inside the picture profession have been few, but the men and women who have signed this pledge recognize a tendency to magnify these misdeeds, and even to create scandal out of trifles when the persons concerned are so prominently in the public eye.

"To correct this tendency on the part of the public, the new Federation is prepared to investigate promptly and thoroughly gossip which may gain currency regarding individuals within the profession, and in case any basis of facts should be found, to act effectively in eliminating the offending person from professional association with the great mass of motion picture workers who live orderly, decent lives.

"The Federation announces that it has the support of the entire picture industry."

This, then, is the first good result which has come out of the evil of unfavorable publicity. What the Federation of Art assures for the present is the elevation of the motion picture profession to the highest possible plane of idealism and morality; what it guarantees for the future is no less than the preservation of those principles of professional pride, artistic sincerity and moral rectitude, which, always the hidden strength of the industry, are now to be the symbols of its desire to keep faith with itself and its public.

No Compromise With Censorship

The following extract from the records of the Guild will be of interest to those who feel that the fight against censorship is still far from being won. It is a recent resolution occasioned by the New York stage censorship question and it puts the Guild definitely on record as opposing, not only screen censorship, but censorship in any form.

"RESOLVED: That the Screen Writers' Guild is opposed to any and all censorship that interferes with the proper presentation of Art and Literature by the press, the novel, the stage, the moving pictures, music, painting and sculpture, and is firmly opposed to any compromising movement, believing from observation and experience that no form of censorship will be established that will not do more harm than good, and, that the present laws are adequate for protection of public morals."

Comment from Student Writers

A monthly department to which students are invited to contribute

CHARACTERIZATION
By Harold Ramslie

In all the very interesting discussions that come under the general heading, "What is Wrong With the Movies?" I have observed that characterization has had little or no mention. Yet here I believe is the most immediate demand for improvement.

Quite often I have heard movie fans express something akin to derision at the obvious means employed to establish the characters in a photoplay, and these fans were by no means of the keenly critical or analytical type. The latter type keeps his dissatisfaction more or less to himself and simply goes less often to the photoplay theatre.

I hold that if the less discriminative theatergoers express an unmistakable negation, then present methods of characterization are already antiquated. It is a well known fact that if the same methods were employed in spoken drama the prefix "melo" would be applied, if nothing worse would happen.

In other words, the villain is taken bodily from melodrama, and that of an old vintage, while the hero is too intolerably perfect. Just like the smooth-faced beauty of the collar advertisement arouses an instinctive ill-will, so does the movie hero fail to get across.

The question is: Can a more subtle, less obvious, yet no less effective, characterization be employed in screen drama without obscuring the clearness of dramatic conflict?

The answer is up to the producers, who no doubt have their opinions up to date in this matter, while I should like very much to hear from others on this interesting phase of the art.

CONCERNING DIALOGUE
By A. M.

In writing for the pictures it is not only necessary to visualize the story clearly in one's own mind, but also to present it in such fashion that the impartial beholder of the pictured play and even the impersonal reader of the script may see the events as pictured by your brain. Words alone cannot do this. In the cinema drama we seek to get away from words as far as can be done without sacrificing its clarity. We must evolve other devices to stimulate the imagination of both the spectator, the script reader, and the continuity writer.

The best picture dramas express their ideas largely by judicious use of symbols. In Rex Ingram's "The Conquering Power," for example, when Eugenie's lover had gone, and we see her alone in the garden, the fact of her loneliness is emphasized when she looks into an empty bird's nest hanging upon a bush. And when her lover returns to find her in the old garden, learns she is still unmarried and declares he still loves her, not a word of his declaration is given on the screen, nor a word of her reply. But the idea of their mutual faithfulness is clearly conveyed when he draws forth the cross she had given him long ago, and she shows him the key he had left with her.

Every now and then in writing a story for the screen, we get into a hole when apparently the advancement of the drama depends upon dialogue. As dialogue belongs to the stage and the printed story, here is where to stop and try to evolve some other way. Of course, we cannot avoid words altogether—they are necessary in order to tell the story clearly in pictures. "The Ole Swimmin' Hole" is proclaimed as a play without subtitles, but to offset this, it had an unusual number of inserts which took their place.

But we can aid the advancement of the pictured story by a symbol or some visible sign giving a clue to the subject of the dialogue. For instance, in one of my own plays recently I reached a point where the heroine accused the hero of a reversion to the savage state. As the scene was a drawing room in the presence of an assembly of the elite, it was rather difficult to bring out the result I wanted without using too many words. To aid in getting the idea across, I had the heroine indicate a painting on the wall representing a savage chief. The setting must always be a fitting frame for the action and can always be made to aid in advancing the story.

Notable for their skill in thus advancing the pictured story with a minimum of words are those produced by the De Milles, Lois Weber, Rex Ingram, Thomas H. Ince and a few others. The student can always profit by a close study of their methods.

"OPTIENCES"
By Russell Paine

How can exhibitors (and hence producers and the rest of us) expect to ensnare the hard money—or more essential still, build up any permanency of response to exploitation, any healthy growth of clientele—when they run "MISS LULU BETT" in between a week of "sure fire" stuff?

In other words, can we writers begin to hope for the day when we can write to *an* audience (or "optience"), rather than to *the* (highly hypothetical) audience of "the world?"

Does the "Atlantic Monthly" run racy melodrama to spice up its program? Does Ziegfield produce "Hamlet" or "Hedda Gabbler" to widen his appeal?

So long as the movies stick to worse than vaudeville hash programs, (vaudevillians have at least *some* system!) of Mutt and Jeff alongside "A Doll's House," a news weekly and a scenic, so long will they remain mere movies, and so long will writers be compelled to throw in enough highbrow to hold the supercilious. By just so much will we be throttled from the expression of real art, which demands its own audience as the better half of vital success.

Is it some silly shibboleth of "democracy" that chains us, or is it stupid habit?



Photoplays in Review by the Staff



"Tol'able David"

(Reviewed by Laura Jansen)

Comment: A simple, compact drama, there is not a foot of this story that does not hold the spectator's intense interest. From David's simple homely struggle to be considered man enough to drink and smoke with his father and brother, to the tearing agony when he discovers he has lost the mail sack, and his grim determination to recover that sack whatever the cost to himself, we have the most vivid characterization in many a picture. His struggling for an ideal rather than for personal gain relieves the melodrama of this last fight and lifts it almost from a physical to a mental conflict. There is plenty of suspense which grows naturally out of the situations and the reactions of the characters. In not showing the final shot of the struggle, that situation is remarkably well handled and we are made to feel the strength of it through David's mighty effort to get the sack into the stage and to drive the horses home. For poignant drama, expressed through tense situations and realistic characterizations, this is probably one of the best pictures of the year.

Synopsis: In the West Virginia mountains live, as congenial neighbors, two families, the Kinemons and the Hatburns. Allen Kinemon drives the mail stage; David, always aspiring to manly things, is still considered only a boy by his father and mother. To little Esther Hatburn next door, he seems very wonderful. Then three criminal cousins of the Hatburns arrive and insist upon Esther's grandfather's hiding them. One day thinking that Allen has spied upon them, one of them throws a big stone and cripples Allen for life. David is arguing with his father that he should be allowed to go too to help in avenging his brother's death, when the father's heart fails him. David seizes his father's gun, but his mother pleads with him as the only man they have now not to go. The family moves to town and David is finally given a position in the country store. One day the stage driver is too drunk to drive, and David is allowed to take the hack. Returning, he discovers he has lost the sack of United States mail. In desperation he drives back along the road, but not finding the sack, reasons that one of the Hatburns, whom he had passed, had picked it up. He goes to their shack, sees the sack, and is about to take it, when the Hatburns interfere. Fearing trouble Esther dashes off for help, but one of the men follows her. Meanwhile David has to shoot the other two in self defense, receiving a shot himself which renders one arm useless. Just as he is struggling with the door, the other Hatburn returns and jumps upon him. They struggle until both are exhausted. As they lie on the floor they both see David's gun under a dresser and both strive to reach it first. Meanwhile Esther has managed to warn the townspeople. As they set out to rescue David the stage dashes in with David lying but half-conscious, battered and bloody across the mail sack.

"The Lotus Eater"

(Reviewed by Elizabeth Niles)

Comment: On the whole a clever and pleasing picture, this is a slight departure from the sterotyped photodrama. Despite its lack of unity of place, and its sudden changes from drama to farce comedy and back, the whole is made harmonious by the underlying theme of the faults of modern life as compared with the Utopian existence on the island. The island scenes are just saved from the burlesque by the sincerity of the characters: the New York situations from melodrama by the odd twist of the wife's decision. The conflict is not especially concentrated or strong, but the strength of the characterization holds the interest and there are an abundance of thrilling and suspenseful scenes to counterbalance this weakness. The chief strength of the picture, however, lies in the novelty of both the theme and the treatment of what under analysis prove to be very old situations. The personality of John Barrymore is eminently suited to the role of Jacques, while Marshall Neilan made the most of the unusual plot.

Synopsis: Jacques Lenoi at the age of twenty-five had never been off his father's yacht lest he should meet and marry a woman before he reached the years of discretion. Just before his death, his father had warned him against women and told him the story of his wife's desertion. Arriving in New York to hear the reading of his father's will, Lenoi sees and falls in love with Madge Vance, a pleasure-loving, fortune-seeking society girl. Without waiting to hear the will read, he follows her to Florida and there despite parental objection and the presence of a wealthy suitor, the young people elope on his yacht. On returning to New York he learns that because he married before he was thirty he will receive but one-third of his fortune. On this reduced income the romantic dreamer and the materialistic girl soon find cause for disagreement, and while she goes about with her former wealthy suitor, he departs on a scientific air flight. Although supposed to be lost in the Pacific Ocean, he manages to come to land on a small island inhabited by shipwrecked people who live in a most commendable Utopian manner without striving, commercialism, or unkindness. Lenoi falls in love with a young girl, but remembering his marriage vows, tells her the truth and spends his time very unhappily. Not overcoming his

homesickness within a year, he is sent back to the trade lanes to be picked up and carried back to the States. Arriving at his home he finds that his wife has been married for six weeks to the wealthy suitor. As they quarrel over her, she decides to take the decision into her own hands and promises her answer the next day. Meanwhile Lenoi goes about the city making comparisons with the life on the island much to the disadvantage of that in New York. The next day the two husbands wait for the wife's decision. It comes in a note saying she has left with an Italian count. Leaving the second husband to the punishment of life in New York, Lenoi departs on his yacht for the island and the little girl with the simple, true love.

"Saturday Night"

(*Reviewed by Elizabeth Niles*)

Comment: Full of comedic situations with never a dull moment the stories of the two mismated couples are carried side by side and woven into a compact altogether entertaining plot. The rather difficult feat of running parallel two overlapping and interlocking triads has been very successfully accomplished with the aid of a few fortuitous circumstances. The contrasting characterization manages to avoid the typical very cleverly and lifts a not unusual plot above the average power to hold the attention. The weak spot in the story is the ending in that it accepts the divorces of the two couples as a happy solution and as a mere matter of every-day occurrence as inconsequential as tossing off a cocktail. While a delightful picture to watch; it is one that is not going to be long remembered; the plot is somewhat palpably fabricated and the ending too unsatisfactory to make the lasting impression of a picture truer to life.

Synopsis: When Shamrock O'Day slipped on the Prentice stairs, with her laundry basket, she also slipped into the heart of Dick Prentice despite his engagement to Iris Van Suydam; and Dick drove Shamrock home and forced Iris to take her chauffeur, Tom, on a picnic, he also drove Iris and Tom to an expression of their love via the motor accident route. Despite the public announcement of their engagement, Iris eloped with Tom; Dick took advantage of his opportunity to marry Shamrock. Tom took Iris to a cheap apartment, where the piano unfolded to become a bed; while Shamrock was shown a suite with fountain bath and French maid. When some of Tom's friends stayed for dinner, their uncouthness shocked the cultured Iris, who in turn horrified them with her cigarette; the party ended in a quarrel over the man's method of dancing with Iris. Meanwhile Shamrock is horrifying her mother and sister-in-law at her first formal dinner with her many faux pas. When she finally falls asleep from too much unaccustomed wine, Dick has to apologize to the guests and carry her from the room. Miserable among too much formality, Shamrock wishes to hire Tom as her chauffeur and goes with him to get Iris' consent. Finding the kitchen in disorder, she is in the midst of cleaning up when Iris returns and resents the interference. The night of the Prentice grand swimming party, Shamrock finds herself so much out of place that she insists on Tom's taking her to Coney Island. An accident to the wheel leaves them in an inaccessible basket though thoroughly happy until nearly dawn. Meanwhile Dick has gone to Tom's apartment and he and Iris sit waiting. When Tom and Shamrock arrive at last, the two men are about to come to blows when Shamrock refuses to leave Tom; Iris remarks that Tom is her husband. Then a fire breaks out and the two men struggle to be the one to save Shamrock. They finally carry her to safety and then Dick remembers Iris who has made no effort to rescue herself. Pushing Tom aside Dick rushes into the building in time to rescue Iris, who remarks that each kind will seek its own. Seven years later Tom and Shamrock and three little ones are enjoying an evening at Coney Island, while Dick and Iris decide it is time they consummated their early engagement.

"The Silent Call"

(*Reviewed by Laura Jansen*)

Comment: This is a "different" picture. The dog is the hero; he is the mainstay of a story, beautifully photographed in gorgeous surroundings. There is a mere thread of a love story, but the plot is filled with suspense, and many thrills. The dog trailing the outlaw, his fights with him and the last fight in the water are simply wonderful. It is a clean story, well told, which dog lovers will like tremendously.

Synopsis: Primarily the story of a dog, a wolfhound, who becomes an outcast from civilization and returns to the life of his wild ancestors. Later, when he finds his master again, the dog strain becomes uppermost and he is relentless in his pursuit of his master's enemies.

Clark Moran, a writer refuses to let "Dad" Kinney destroys all the litter of a wolf who has mated with a dog. He names the pup "Flash" and raises it. When it is a year old Clark is called East by his publisher. The dog, believing that his master has abandoned him, haunts the places where he used to go.

Cattle are found killed by a wolf and a reward is offered for the lobo. Dad Kinney suspects Flash and finds that he is the culprit. The boys at the ranch, who love the dog plead for his life, but in vain. Flash, appearing to understand, runs away and is shot by Kinney. He is not mortally wounded, roams the plains, meets a she wolf and she mates with him.

Betty Houston loves Clark. Report of her engagement to another man makes Clark go west without seeing her. She follows him. Her father is in the woods investigating rock formation. He is made a prisoner by a gang of rustlers of which Ash Brent is the head and Luther Nash, the guiding spirit. Betty's horse bolts in the woods, Ash finds her and attempts to force his attentions on her, Flash, loafing, sees his old enemy, makes a dash for him and Ash frees the girl. She takes Flash to her cabin.

Flash finds his master and divides his time between the girl and Clark. Nash calls on Betty to tell her that her father is a prisoner; he tries to embrace her but is routed by Clark, sleeping near by. Flash follows him and Clark, tells a posse, searching for the outlaws, where they are hidden. Ash kidnaps the girl, but she manages to send a message to Clark who follows and sends Flash on the girl's trail. The dog routs the outlaw and finally kills him after several spectacular fights. Betty and Clark find each other. The outlaws are made prisoners.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED
Concerning the Writing of Photoplays

Q. I desire to use stanzas of a nationally known poem for the titles in my next story. Is there any objection to this? D. F.

A. Providing the entire poem is not used, there is no objection, but do not overlook the fact that the author must be given credit for the stanzas used.

Q. Is it necessary to write a letter of explanation of a story when sending in a photoplay to a Scenario Department? A. F.

A. It is best *not* to burden the Scenario Editor with useless letters. He has a sufficiently difficult task in reading and deciding upon scripts without answering useless correspondence or even reading it. Be certain that you have placed your name and address plainly written upon the script, enclose a stamped and addressed envelope for return of same, and you may be sure that it will receive the best attention.

Q. I desire to adapt a current book to the screen. What is necessary in order to do this? M. W.

A. It is necessary to secure the writer's or the publisher's permission. If, however, the book is out of copyright, and the author dead, it would be of no avail, for the various Studios have their staff writers adapt such books and would not pay an outsider for an adaptation.

Q. Why is it necessary to eliminate one of the characters in my story that is a "dope" addict? G. W.

A. For the reason that the Government forbids this; they are now endeavoring to stamp out this habit, and if it is permitted shown on the screen it is brought to mind, and the influence is bad. To be a success, the story must be wholesome.

Q. Is it advisable to select one's material from murder cases and the like about which we read in the daily newspapers? T. McG.

A. Sensational murder cases which cause nation-wide interest usually inspire hundreds of people with practically the same ideas for a photoplay, so you can readily understand what it would mean to use such material unless it were cleverly combined with a larger share of originality.

Q. Why is it necessary to avoid the use of "retrospection" in writing a photoplay? P. S.

A. The reason that "retrospection" should be avoided is simply this: It is confusing to the audience, inasmuch as they are just becoming interested in one story when another flashes upon the screen. Likewise with the second when it flashes back to the first, and so on. However, it is permissible to use retrospection when it is *impossible* to construct a photoplay without it. In that case, it must be made as *brief* as possible.

Q. Is it necessary that one have a clever narrative style in writing photoplays? R. S. B.

A. No; a clever narrative style is not necessary, but it is helpful and when one can, it is well to endeavor to create an interesting style of writing. However, narrative is worthless unless it is accompanied by a dramatic plot.

Q. Does an original scenario ever find its way to the producer's desk? V. L.

A. When a scenario is submitted to a studio, it is first carefully read by a staff reader who determines whether or not the material is particularly suited to the company's needs. If it is desirable, the script is then handed to the scenario editor who usually has full charge of the selection of material. However, when a producer is to be consulted, the story is presented to him personally after having been recommended by the editor.

Q. Is it possible to secure a position as a "reader" on a scenario staff without having had previous motion picture experience? M. R. K.

A. We do not say it is *impossible* to secure a position as a studio "reader" without having had previous experience, but it would be exceedingly difficult since "readers" are required to have a thorough knowledge of photoplay writing as well as photoplay production.

Q. My story has a fantastic theme, and deals with mythological characters. It is interesting, but has been returned as "not available." Why? E. S.

A. Styles in motion pictures change as rapidly as in anything else. The present demand is for modern themes of American people, American locale, and American subjects.

Q. A story dealing with the reconstruction period during the late war, in a small European kingdom, with slight bolsheviki tendency, has been severely criticised; please point out my error. F. M.

A. The public and the producers do not care to consider subjects dealing with the late war, or in fact any war. After many years of actual bloodshed and tragedies the world is looking for happiness. Further, bolsheviki subjects are censorable.

Q. What is meant by the unity of time and action? M. S.

A. Unity of time is the duration of the time consumed in the action of the story,—a few days, or a few weeks rather than months and years; the unity of action is confining your story to a *small* area, *not* scattered over great areas, such as this country, Honolulu, Japan, etc.

Q. What is meant by the premise of a story? R. F.

A. It is the opening statement of the objective of the story. Many times this is declared by a character when it is introduced.

Q. Why has the "great outdoors" been recommended as the foundation for a story? J. N.

A. It does away with the numerous sets, which are very expensive to build; then, too, the beauty of nature cannot be equalled or surpassed by artifice.

Film Producers are Calling: *"Author—AUTHOR!"*

IN a national search for new screen writers, motion picture producers are combing the highways and byways of American life for everyday people to write screen stories that will command the handsome figures they offer. In the last six months more than $50,000.00 in scenario contest prizes have been offered by producers and newspapers in the quest for screenable stories.

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The Story—Plus

(*Continued from Page 7*)

am happy to state that results exceeded my expectations.

I would not have it understood that all my stories are written *plus*. Far from it. But in each instance where I have set out deliberately to write a story *plus*, invariably it has been taken over by the picture producers. My latest story, conceived and executed in this business-like manner, developed screen rights for which the sum of $2,500 was paid.

The question may arise; Does writing a story *plus* militate against its acceptance by a magazine editor? In my experience it does not, but is more often an aid than otherwise. Personally, I find that a plot is given life and human interest by a mental picture of the situations flashed upon an imaginary screen. The simplicity and ever-growing suspense of a good "picture," I believe, will be productive of the same admirable results in the narrative form.

So now, as at the beginning, let me repeat the commonplace statement that "the story's the thing;" but, brothers and sisters of the busy typewriter, if you have not the technical knowledge to make a story plus adaptability for "pictures," then acquire that knowledge as quickly as possible. Even though you do not use this knowledge in every story you write, yet applied to an occasional story it is sure to bring its full reward .

The Screen Drama League

(*Continued from Page 8*)

fully eliminating every possible objectionable scene from their productions, but that censors still persist in mutilating practically every picture released, by rulings that are rendered "childish" through the very fact that each board objects to a different portion of each film—thus proving that it is not a desire to suppress immoral scenes, but a desire to exercise new-found power, that governs the decisions of these bodies. Tell them that if the censorship of pictures persists, the next move will be against novels, magazines, newspapers—until, finally, the very ministry itself will feel the iron hand of tyranny.

Possibly, you can interest the editor of your leading paper in this matter. Surely any reputable member of the press will recognize the soundness of your arguments. Write to him, at any rate, and place the facts in his possession.

The proprietors of the theaters in your town, of course, will join hand-in-hand with you, from the beginning, in your efforts. Their interests are vitally bound up with the anti-censorship movement. If the picture industry fails—they too will fail. The wide-awake ones will not hesitate to run "slides," preceding the featured picture of the program, explaining that they are absolutely opposed to censorship—and telling why.

In the next issue of *The Photodramatist,* further information will be given you regarding the activities of the League. Meanwhile, follow out the suggestions outlined in this article. Do not delay. Advocates of censorship are tireless in their activities. Opponents of censorship must be equally alert.

"Gossip Street"

(*Continued from Page 30*)

of 1921-22. This is a victory for art in the films. Mr. Earle has been given complete supervision over final cutting and editing of the picture, and it will be released as a Ferdinand Earl Production under the title, "Omar."

BRADLEY KING has written an original for Douglas McLean, which is now being produced at the Ince Studios.

GEORGE ADE'S original contribution to the screen in which Thomas Meighan is featured is entitled "Our Leading Citizen."

"CARRY ON THE RACE" an original photoplay produced by the Mission Film Corporation will soon be ready for release.

J. D. WILLIAMS, general manager of Associated First National Picture, Inc., says, "A pronounced upward trend in business is observable, especially for 'big' pictures. There is no longer a market for mediocre pictures, but photoplays with strong themes, artistic direction, all-star casts, and novelty of plot treatment are doing splendidly."

YO-HO-HO for a life on the bounding main. Sea stories seem to be the thing—as witness Dick Barthelmess in "The Seventh Day;" Hope Hampton in "The Isle of Dead Ships," Allen Holubar in "The Soul Seeker," Katherine MacDonald in "The Infidel," Hobart Bosworth in "The Sea Lion."

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Why Call it "Photodrama"?

(*Continued from Page 19*)

may, by the exercise of ingenuity, reaching back, sometimes, through several scenes of preparation, be rendered splendidly visual. But be sure it *can* be rendered visual before you permit your story to depend upon its representation for its effective construction.

You are likely to say, "Here's a corking story, I've got. I'll convert it into a photodrama." But you will do nothing of the kind unless its vital content is such as to lend itself to the concrete interpretation demanded by the mechanical limitations of the art. The unwisdom of the attempt will be brought home to you if you will consider that most of the *big* failures the screen has known have resulted from the attempt to utilize the publicity value of unscreenable stories by trying to screen them. Nobody ever succeeded in doing it. They may have succeeded in screening a fairly close adaptation of the story, and this, in turn, may have met with a certain success due to what intrinsic merit was salvaged from the story or, as has often been the case, injected into it by a clever adapter. So much for the word "Photo."

As to the second half of the compound word—"Drama," we are here on more difficult ground, for we are outside of the concrete mechanics of the camera, and are concerned with the meanings to us of the things and actions that the pantomime and its settings portray. But a few simple concepts may guide us if only we will keep them constantly in mind.

We want a story, and whether this is in verse, in a short prose form or in a novel or a spoken play or in pantomime, our requirements are the same—it must closely follow a main line from its starting point in the lives of its chief characters, through the happenings that develop directly out of the things with which we start, and on to the ending of those same things. This is the singleness, the unity of interest, which is the core of every real story; and it remains for us only to see that that story also produces in us the impressions that are essentially those of drama for the story to be a dramatic story, which, with few exceptions, is what is required for screen purposes.

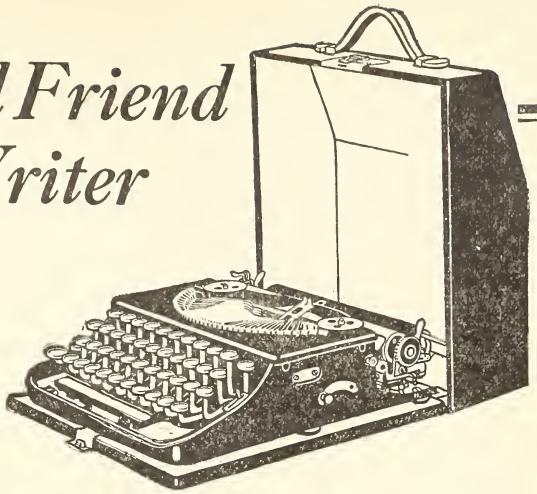
This brings us to the crux of successful photoplay writing—the difficulty after mastery has been accomplished of the mechanistic requirements of the art. What is the essence of drama? What distinguishes it from the presentation that fulfills all the requirements of the story, and yet is lacking in the elements of drama?

It is emotion. The situations brought about must be emotion-inducing in both the characters and the audience. The stresses that induce emotion in the one will induce it in the other, for the audience is sympathetic. If they do *not* induce emotion in the audience it will only be because it is really not induced in the characters—the stresses are artificial, spurious, and no matter how strenuously the actors try to simulate emotion, or how cleverly they do it, we know that the character would *not* be emotionally affected, and so we are not affected. If the conflict and struggle are real, by which we mean natural, emotion is their inevitable product, and it is induced in audience and characters alike simultaneously, as if pulled with one string. The more intense the feeling, the stronger the emotion and therefore the stronger the drama. But remember always that you cannot induce feeling by commanding it. You must place your characters in situations and carry them through crisis which NATURALLY and inevitably, according to the laws of human nature and the customs and institutions of human life, distill emotion.

Consider, then, that *the photodrama is the photograph of a pantomime enacting an emotion-producing story*. Keep these basic requirements ever in mind—photograph-pantomime-emotion-producing-story — and you cannot go wrong on fundamental technique.

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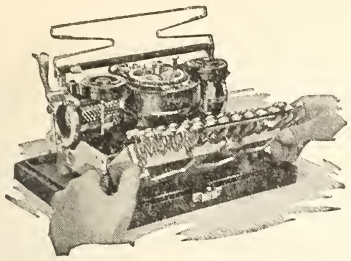
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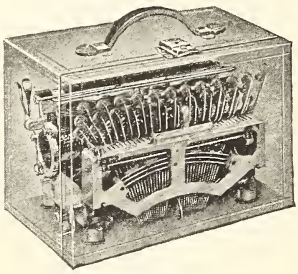
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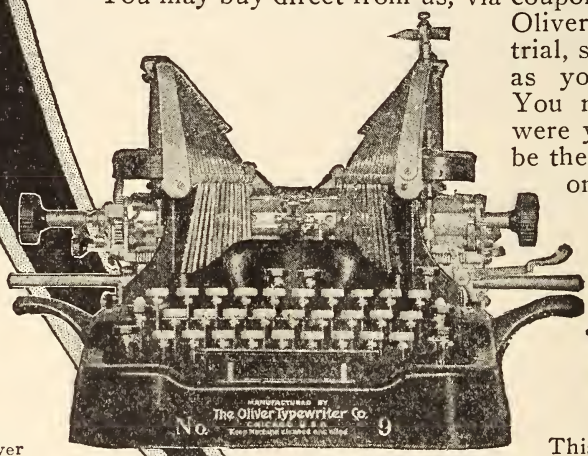
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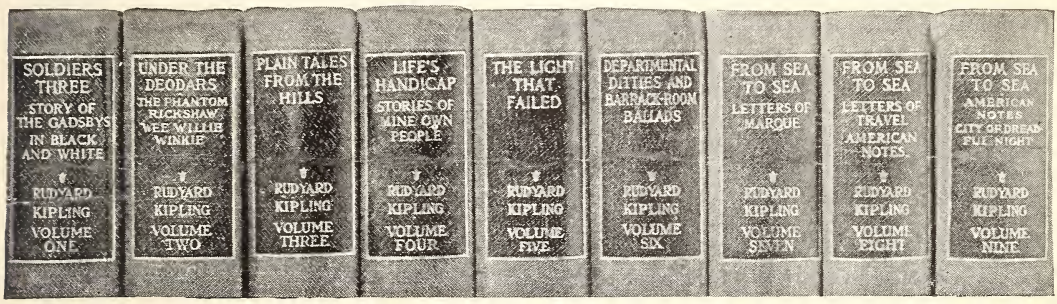
THERE was a light in the temple, and as we passed we could hear the voices of men. . . . Before we could stop him, Fleete dashed up the steps, patted two priests on the back, and was grinding the ashes of his cigar-butt into the forehead of the red stone image.

Then without any warning, a silver man came out of the recess behind the image of the god. He was perfectly naked in that bitter, bitter cold, and his body shone like frosted silver. . . . Also he had no face, because he was a leper of some years' standing. . The Silver Man, making a noise like the mewing of an otter, caught Fleete around the body and dropped his head on Fleete's breast. . . ."

The above passage is taken from "The Mark of the Beast," page 294, Volume IV, of the AUTHORIZED EDITION OF RUDYARD KIPLING.

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